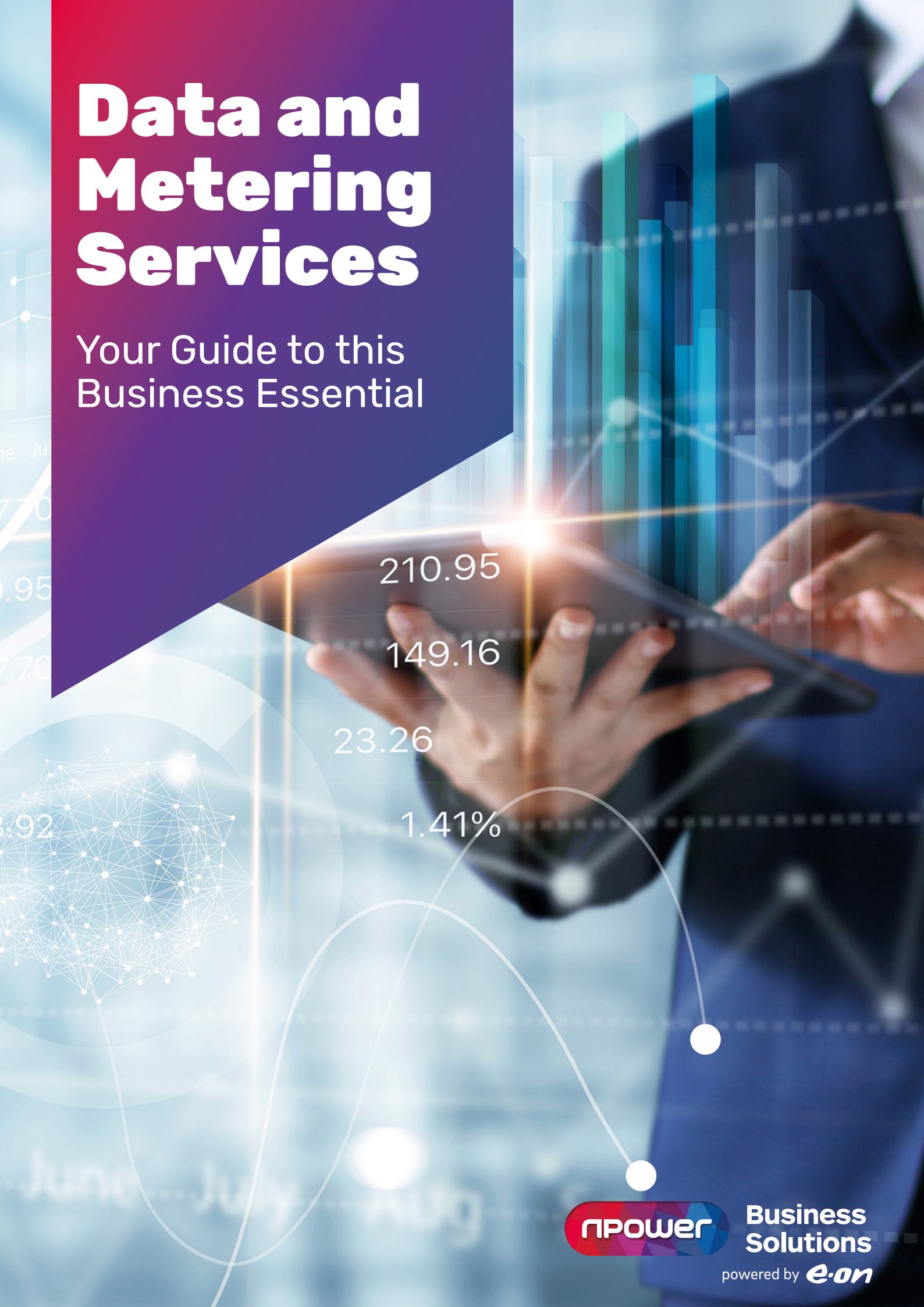
Data and Metering Services

Your Guide to this Business Essential



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Introduction

From the smallest business to the largest corporation, every organisation needs an energy meter. It is a vital piece of technology that has a direct impact on both the amount a business pays for its energy, and its carbon footprint.

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With energy prices remaining a key area of concern for business – our 2024 Business Energy Tracker report revealed that 40% of businesses said it was their top risk – having greater visibility in terms of how and where your business is using energy is a major priority.

Despite this, deciding which meter to install, and how to appoint a Meter Operator (MOP) and Data Collector (DC) services provider, has traditionally been an area where businesses haven't had much of a say.

This is generally because these services are automatically appointed by your energy supplier, or there is a 'default' option of choosing the cheapest provider.

However, things are changing. The Market-wide Half-Hourly Settlement (MHHS) programme is set to have a huge impact on the British electricity sector and the way that data is collected. As a result, businesses will have more of a choice, and will be able to appoint a metering partner based on their own specific requirements.

That said, if you are not familiar with metering, it can be difficult to know where to start. This guide will provide you with everything you need to know, from the different types of energy meter available, to how to choose a metering partner and why your energy data is a business essential.

We also take a look at MHHS, the changes it brings, and how these could impact your business.

Section 1

Why data and metering are important

Why data and metering are important

Over the past few years, businesses have had to deal with multiple global, economic and political events that have impacted the price they pay for energy.

In addition, the rising number of industry costs – such as standing charges, environmental policy and network charges – have caused energy invoices to significantly increase.

Unfortunately, these are elements of the energy invoice that businesses have little control over.

However, the one area where your business can have some influence is by measuring and monitoring your energy use – and then using this information to help reduce consumption.

This is why your energy meter – and your energy data – are business essentials.

Benefits of data and metering:

Accurate invoices

Collecting actual data means that your energy invoices will be based on what you actually use, rather than estimated readings.

Greater understanding

Your data provides detailed insights into how and when you are using energy, helping to visualise your consumption trends.

Make improvements

This data can help you to make informed decisions about your ongoing energy management strategy, to help you to reduce both costs and carbon emissions.

Section 2

Metering technology: which is right for your business?

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Metering technology: which is right for your business?

How and where your energy data is captured will depend on the meter you have installed.

The key driver for the type of meter your business has is driven by the capacity - also known as kilovolt-ampere (kVA) - required at your premises. There are several types of meter commonly used for business energy users:

Traditional meters

These meters require manual readings as they don't have automated reading capability.

Future regulatory expectations will mean that all meters will be required to have a read taken every four months.

Advanced meters

These meters are primarily used on business premises and are able to remotely provide Half-Hourly (HH) consumption data via an appointed Data Collector (DC).

These type of meters are also commonly referred to as either HH or Automated Meter Reading (AMR) meters.

Smart meters

These meters are more prevalent in the residential or smaller business markets.

They are able to record and transmit HH data, as well as calculate simple fixed tariff usage and display this on an in-house display (IHD) unit.

Is it time to switch to a Smart or advanced meter?

One question we are often asked is whether businesses with a traditional meter would benefit from making the switch to a Smart or advanced meter.

The simple answer is yes. There are many advantages to installing more advanced metering technology for any business.

For instance, these meters ensure accurate invoicing, so you only pay for the electricity you use, and your data is collected remotely, reducing the need for manual meter readings.

This more granular data can also provide you with a highly detailed and dynamic picture of your energy use, making it easier to track and measure your consumption and associated carbon emissions.

Data collection is carried out by a data services agent and can then be shared with you, for example via a data visualisation platform, which the agent who collects your data can usually provide. This can help you to:

Get a better picture of your usage, helping you manage your energy demand

Get detailed information on how and when you are using energy

Support investment decisions in additional energy reduction measures

As a result, this more granular approach means you can be confident that your energy invoices are correct and based on actual usage, with very little manual intervention.

In addition, under MHHS – which requires all meters to be settled on an HH basis – if you have a traditional or Non-Half Hourly (NHH) meter, then you could experience more changes.

It is important to note that MHHS reform does not mandate meter exchanges – all meters will be migrated to be HH settled regardless of the type of meter installed.

However, if you have a traditional or NHH meter, then your data will only be read monthly or quarterly, and you won't benefit from the more granular data provided by Smart or advanced meter technologies.

If you do want to exchange your meter, you can get in touch with your energy supplier to arrange this. For the majority of installations, there is no additional cost, although this will depend on the specific requirements from your supplier.

Radio Teleswitch Service (RTS) shutdown

RTS meters will be switched off on 30 June 2025 across the energy industry.

After this date, meters that use the RTS may lose critical functionalities. For instance, depending on your meter type, off-peak timing may cease to operate which could result in the loss of heating and hot water services.

What you need to do

If you have an RTS meter, please get in touch with your supplier. If you are an npower Business Solutions (nBS) customer, contact us as soon as possible to arrange a suitable meter upgrade which will ensure that your service is not disrupted.

For more information, visit our RTS hub or watch our quick video guide which outlines the next steps you need to take.

Section 3

Monitoring and reporting: key benefits

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Monitoring and reporting: key benefits

One of the major benefits of having an advanced energy meter in place is the amount of useful energy data it produces.

As it automatically collects this data on an HH basis, you and your metering partner will have access to a wealth of information about your energy use.

This data can then be used to inform your ongoing energy management and sustainability strategy.

Using technology to take action

There is always the option to manually analyse your energy consumption data yourself.

However, using an online visualisation platform can help you make smarter decisions about your ongoing energy management plan.

A data visualisation platform provides easy access to your consumption data via intuitive reports and dashboards. It can help you to:

1. Understand energy use in near 'real time'*
You can compare site information, identify problems or discrepancies, and monitor spikes in consumption during out-of-hours periods.

2. Drive behavioural change
You can ask important questions to help resolve unanticipated and unnecessary energy usage. For example, are automated heating or lighting controls working correctly, and switching off during non-operational periods? Have they accidently been switched to manual, which could see assets running unnecessarily?

3. Set energy reduction targets
This data can be used to create action plans for your colleagues so everyone has a role to play in reducing consumption and carbon emissions.

4. Influence others within your business
This could be anything from introducing staff training and new processes to using data around inefficiencies to support bigger investment decisions.

Data to meet your needs

The way you use this data will depend on the nature of your business. This could include factors such as the business sector in which you operate, or whether you have a single site or multiple sites.

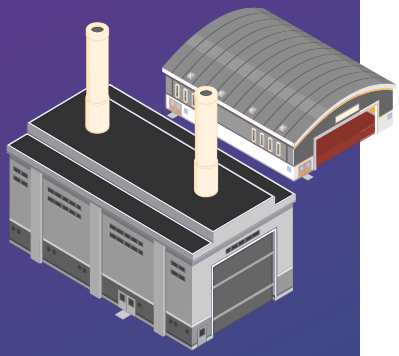
Single site:

Out-of-hours consumption
You can identify spikes in usage when the site is closed (such as a retail store) or during different shift patterns (such as a manufacturer).

Consumption comparison
You can compare usage for the same site but for different time periods. For example, you can compare with the previous months, and/or with the same period during the previous year.

Multi-sites:

Same as single site, plus:



League table ranking
You can normalise consumption usage across sites by using meaningful data such as production (for a manufacturer) and footfall or sales (for a retailer).

Site classification
You can create and group usage reports based on a set classification. For example, manufacturing or research and development (R&D) (manufacturer) and shopping centre or high street (retail).

*Data is delivered the next day.

Section 4

Mandatory metering: preparing for the future

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Mandatory metering: preparing for the future

The MHHS reform is set to be one of the biggest transformations to the British electricity market since privatisation.

Instigated by Ofgem, at its heart is unlocking more granular and timely data to understand how and when all consumers use electricity.

Once implemented, MHHS will provide an incredible level of visibility into how much electricity is being consumed for every 30-minute period throughout the day and night. Having access to his additional insight will help to support an energy system that can forecast, generate and distribute electricity far more efficiently than ever before.

Timeline for MHHS implementation

Current time

Industry testing is ongoing to ensure each supplier and meter agent has systems and processes in place that will operate with the new MHHS industry architecture. If your portfolio includes Unmetered Supplies (UMS) that don't have an HH meter attached – for example, the electricity that powers traffic lights, streetlights or CCTV - this will be covered by an industry modification designed to support MHHS called P434. All businesses with existing NHH UMS will be migrated by September 2025.

October 2025

The migration window opens for suppliers and agents who have completed and qualified in their Systems Integration Testing (SIT). Due to the scale of the project, customer meter migrations will be phased through 2025, 2026 and into 2027. When your business migrates will depend on when your energy supplier qualifies.

May 2026

The migration window opens for suppliers and agents who've chosen the 'qualification' route, whereby their systems and processes have been assessed to comply with new MHHS requirements. As above, when your business migrates will depend on when your energy supplier qualifies.

May 2027

Meter migrations are complete.

July 2027

The new MHHS model will come into effect.

Key changes under MHHS

The major change you will notice is a new name for your metering agent. You may also see changes to the way your electricity supply meter is classified and the terminology on your energy invoices.

What mandatory HH metering will mean for your business

More opportunities to save energy

You can't manage what you can't see. HH metering helps you to better understand your consumption, helping you to identify ways to save energy, costs and carbon emissions.

More transparency

MHHS will result in more granular cost allocation, so you pay for your energy at the time when you are using it.

More choice

Businesses can appoint their own metering and data agent directly, rather than just going with the choice of their supplier.

More innovation

As the market evolves, we will see more innovative products from energy suppliers, such as time-of-use tariffs.

Pre-MHHS

- There is a mix of HH and NHH traditional meters in operation
- Businesses with HH meters need a Meter Operator (MOP), Data Aggregator (DA) and Data Collector (DC) – this is mandated by Ofgem
- If you don't appoint your own meter agents, your supplier will usually appoint them on your behalf
- Businesses with traditional NHH meters don't need to appoint meter agents – meter operation and meter reads are usually managed or outsourced by their supplier, with the cost of these functions included in the standing charge

Post-MHHS

- Meter agent roles will change – we have outlined the main changes in the table below
- Businesses will have more of a say on who to appoint as their metering and data agent
- All meters will be HH settled, even traditional meters
- The Profile Class of your Meter Point Administration Number (MPAN) will also change. After the MHHS migration is complete, Profile Classes will no longer be used. The only exceptions to this are Profile Classes 02 and 04, which will continue to be used to identify Economy 7 and 10 meters

HH or AMR	
Current meter agent	**New agent role under MHHS**
HH Meter Operator (MOP)	Metering Service (Advanced) (MSA)
HH Data Collector (DC)	Advanced Data Service (ADS)

Smart and traditional (dumb)	
Current meter agent	**New agent role under MHHS**
Non-Half Hourly (NHH) MOP	Metering Service (Smart) (MSS)
NHH DC	Smart Data Service (SDS)

UMS	
Current meter agent	**New agent role under MHHS**
Unmetered Supplies Operator (UMSO)	UMSO (no change)
Meter Administrator (MA)	Unmetered Supplies Data Service (UMSDS)

Section 5

Future metering agents: selecting the right partner

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Future metering agents: selecting the right partner

Market reforms mean that businesses will have to consider their metering needs and who they then choose as their metering agent.

The below checklist can be used as a guide of things to consider:

Make sure your metering agent matches your meter type

Your energy usage no longer dictates the type of metering agent you need. Instead, it depends on how the energy usage at your site is measured or the type of metering you have.

A Smart or traditional meter will need to be supported by a Smart Data Service (SDS) agent and a Metering Service (Smart) (MSS) agent, while an AMR or HH meter will require the appointment of an Advanced Data Service (ADS) agent and a Metering Service (Advanced) (MSA) agent.

Watch out for hidden services or charges

Ensure that you understand all services that are being provided in the contract and those for which additional charges may apply.

It can make the contract seem less expensive when certain services such as manual meter readings (the need to physically read meters if they are not automatically polling) are not included within the regular charge. Also be aware of any need to update SIM cards in certain meters, for example earlier models of some Smart meters. Choosing an agent that provides an all-inclusive service means there won't be any unexpected costs.

Understand service level agreements (SLAs)

The length of time that it takes a metering agent to respond to queries and faults is important, as any downtime can impact a business's operations.

Therefore, you should understand an agent's SLAs, as well as their data accuracy rating for their data collection activities, when deciding which agent is best for your business.

Make sure the services meet all requirements

When choosing a metering agent, it is important to consider both your requirements and those of your energy supplier.

For example, you should consult with your energy provider to understand what they expect from your metering agent, so this can be included into the contract, and avoid any future additional costs.

Section 6

Data and metering: three steps to take now

Data and metering: three steps to take now

In conclusion, your data and metering services are essential to having a clear understanding of how and where your business is using energy.

Here are three steps to take to ensure you are making the most of your meter:

1. **Review your metering needs**
With market changes set to impact the way energy data is collected and used; it is important to ensure your current meter is meeting the long-term requirements for your business. For example, if you have a traditional meter, it is worth investigating whether switching to a Smart or advanced meter would benefit your business, particularly if you have targets to lower energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions.

2. **Understand your data**
When it comes to taking any meaningful action, you need to understand how your energy data can be used to inform your energy management plan. If this useful data is not being analysed correctly, then it is meaningless. An online visualisation platform can enable you to run detailed reports, look at consumption forecasts, compare sites and set up alerts if your energy use has exceeded expected levels. This means you can pinpoint opportunities to invest in new energy efficiency measures, helping you reduce costs and emissions even further.

3. **Monitor market developments**
As well as the MHHS reform, there will always be new energy market developments and policies that could impact how you use, monitor and analyse your energy. You can ask your energy supplier for any information about the latest market movements - for example, our MHHS hub is regularly updated with key information for businesses to help them navigate this important change.

Encouragingly, insight from our 2024 Business Energy Tracker revealed that the energy crisis resulted in many businesses becoming more aware of their energy and how they use their energy data:

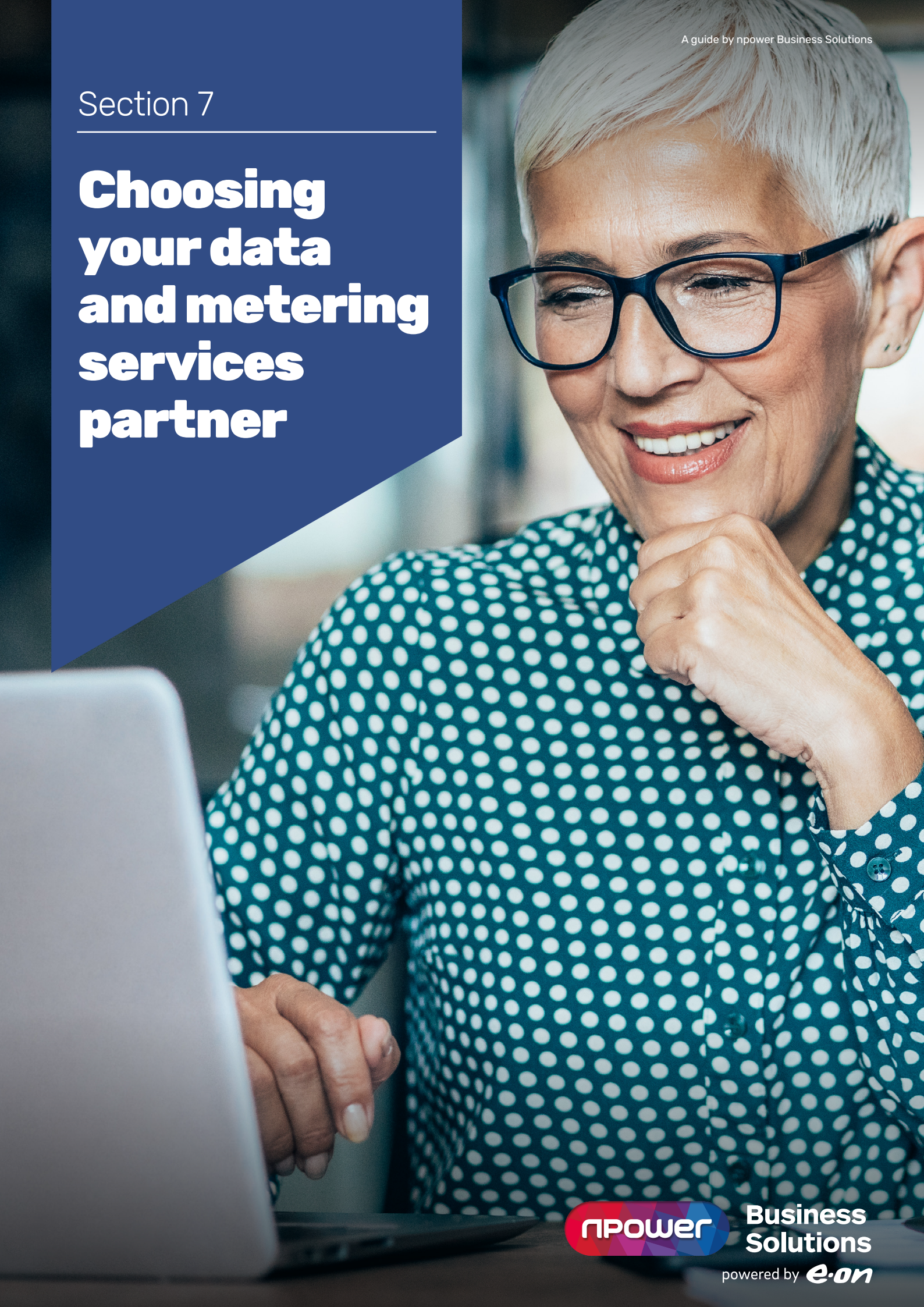
53% say they use it to monitor energy consumption

50% report their energy data to senior management

40% use it to support the business case for investment in energy efficiency measures

Section 7

Choosing your data and metering services partner



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Choosing your data and metering services partner

When choosing a data and metering services partner, it is crucial to work with an accredited metering agent that understands the pivotal role that data plays in managing your energy use and supporting your journey to net zero.

Data-powered decision making

Using an innovative energy data visualisation platform can help you make smarter decisions about your energy strategy.

These platforms can provide easy access to your consumption data via intuitive dashboards, enabling you to run detailed reports, look at consumption forecasts, compare sites and set up alerts if your energy use has exceeded expected levels.

This means you can pinpoint opportunities for energy savings and carbon emissions reduction.

They can also help you build the business case for investment in new energy efficiency measures, helping you reduce costs and emissions even further.

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