

AMDEA MEDIA RELEASE

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Helping to connect appliances and net zero homes

While valuing their home appliances and wanting to do the right thing to combat climate change, British homeowners are still shaky on the facts and how the two connect, a new survey reveals.

Almost three quarters (74%) of people believe sustainability means ensuring new products they buy are made using carbon neutral processes. Yet nearly two thirds (61%) of homeowners are indifferent to a manufacturer's environmental credentials when making a purchase, according to a survey¹ carried out for the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances (AMDEA).

Today AMDEA launches a new [Sustainability section](#) on its website to explain to householders the environmental considerations that lie behind each phase in the life cycle of their fridge or washing machine. The content aims, over time, to clarify how essential appliances fit in with the evolving circular economy, their potential contribution to the 1.5C climate target and the net-zero home.

"For people to make the right choices now and for the future, they need to understand how their buying choices will affect our planet. Throughout their operations, appliance manufacturers are striving for carbon neutrality, making great advances towards sustainability, and we think it will help householders to know more about this to make informed choices," said AMDEA, CEO, Paul Hide.

Home appliances feature in the survey as hugely important in people's lives. As many as 80% could not give up their washing machine even to save the planet, rating it higher in importance than their central heating (79%) or their car (61.5%).

Householders are unaware of the strides made by the industry towards sustainability. Just under half (48%) believe manufacturers have made some progress, 31% do not think they have made much or any at all and the remaining 20% don't know or are unaware the information is available.

The new Sustainability section puts into context the advances made using a 'circular economy' navigation. Here, by clicking on each phase of an appliance's life cycle, visitors can find out more about progress towards carbon neutrality. These phases include:

- Production - eco-design, materials used and manufacturing processes.
- Eco-performance - use in homes including energy and water consumption
- Recycling and recovery or repair and re-use.

Over two thirds of homeowners (67%) claim to be much or moderately more likely to buy an appliance made of some recycled materials. However, even though nearly 40% do consider a manufacturer's position on the environment before making a purchase, knowledge of the substantial reduction in critical resources used during manufacture was very low. Nine out of ten significantly underestimated water reduction, which has come down by 61% over the past decade, in large part due to the reprocessing of water used in production.

More surprisingly, knowledge that the improved energy efficiency of the average fridge has nearly halved consumption over the past decade was underestimated by 3 out of 4 respondents, even

¹ All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from 3Gem Research. Total sample size was 2,000 homeowners. The survey was carried out online from 4 – 9 November 2021.

though this impacts on their energy bills. To put this eco-saving in context, practically all of our 28 million homes are running one, or more, fridge or fridge freezer.

Yet some highly publicised environmental concerns do hit home. Belief in the repurposing of plastic bottles is extremely high and 80% correctly believe that plastic bottles are being used to make some new appliances. Knowledge of other alternatives with which manufacturers are trying to reduce reliance on new oil-based plastics was, on the other hand, much lower. Less than half (45.3%) were familiar with using plastics derived from corn starch or sugar cane and under a third believed that one manufacturer was repurposing fishing nets.

Most respondents (51%) wrongly thought local councils fund the recycling of appliances when disposed of and almost 70% were unaware it is the industry itself which pays for recycling through the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Scheme.

Further findings of the survey include:

- Just one in ten believe correctly that 80% of the materials in a washing machine can be recycled at end of life.
- 41% could not give up their Sunday roast or their foreign holidays, even to save the planet.

More information on sustainability throughout the whole life cycle of appliances, from design and manufacture, through use in homes, to recycling and recovery can be found at www.amdea.org.uk/industry-issues/sustainability/

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Notes to editors

- 1- AMDEA is the UK trade association for manufacturers of large and small domestic appliances; representing over 85% of the domestic appliance industry, rising to 90% of white goods brands. Members' products include most of the UK's top selling brands of major white goods, other large and small kitchen appliances, heating, water heating, floor care, waste disposal and ventilation equipment.
- 2- High definition screen shots of the website are available on request.

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