

Table 1. Timeline of key events in the UK home energy efficiency sector, 2012-14
(Compiled from a range of government and industry sources)

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Events</i>
December 2012 – March 2013	Extreme uncertainty in home energy efficiency markets as government consultation paper on new schemes not yet published, but previous funding schemes (CERT, CESP etc.) have stopped.
April 2013	Green Deal and ECO subsidies start – but details still not yet published. Big six energy companies cautious about issuing new contracts, limiting duration and scale of work.
Summer 2013	Green Deal and ECO details now clear. Prices for energy efficiency work drop dramatically. Some sub-contractors relying solely on ECO go out of business.
December 2013	Green Deal take-up is extremely low so ministers announce a new short-term subsidy – the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund (GDHIF). Companies develop marketing to attract customers with the new £4,000 cashback scheme for May 2014.
December 2013	Chancellor’s Autumn Statement announces ECO funding to change from 1st April 2014, particularly for external wall insulation (EWI).
December 2013 – April 2014	Extreme pressure to get EWI on the books before the cut-off date; a mad rush ensues to get work done. In April, many workers are laid off after an intense period of work.
May 2014	Ministers announce that the GDHIF cashback will be £6,000 not £4,000, but they fail to make it clear when this will happen. Chaos reigns. All customers who signed up wait for new larger incentive. No firm dates are given until the DECC releases details in June.
June 2014	More confusion. The scheme is pulled after 2-3 days operation. All the £70m seems is committed in the form of 9,000 cashback vouchers. No-one understands how it happened so quickly. Foul play is suspected. Some sub-contractors don’t get paid; some customers don’t get the cashback they expected and are left with large unexpected bills.
September 2014	House of Commons Committee on Energy and Climate Change recommends that home retrofitting needs an injection of new life, suggesting incentives from Council Tax and Stamp Duty. They label DECC communications “confusing”.
November 2014	£24m of new funds for Green Deal programme released. The scheme closes the same day as being opened - all the money had been allocated in vouchers. An even worse fiasco than in the summer