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The New Green Concierges

When it comes to green issues Londoners are quite contradictory. Surveys show that many will say that on the one hand they want to do more to protect the planet, but on the other hand don't want to compromise their lifestyle. As well as men caring less, a big problem is also that many (both male and female) are confused about how to make an impact, especially the younger age groups. A recent survey showed that 18-29 year olds are 10 times more confused about the issues than the 30 to 50 year olds, and that while 32 % of the over 50s are doing as much as possible to protect the environment, only 17 % of 18 to 29 year olds are doing their bit.

One of the key problems, particularly for busy urban dwellers, is time and information – which is where the new and growing breed of so-called Green Concierges come in. The term has travelled over from America where you can get everything from a green concierge for your wedding to a green concierge honeymoon service. Green Concierge Travel (www.greenconciergetravel.com) offers more than just organising a more eco-friendly train trip. They enable you while travelling for business or pleasure “to support the same types of businesses and services that you do at home – the green cleaner who gave up toxic dry cleaning chemicals, the restaurant supporting local farmers or serving sustainable fish choices. Or you might want to ride a bike, drop in on a yoga class or take a picnic to an area of natural beauty.”

Back in London meanwhile the concierges are appearing on many scales from households to the government, and it will be a key sought-after job description of the future. At the top level the government have ordered ministers to assess the climate cost of all decisions from new road works and runways to housing and energy stations. In order to calculate and make decisions a price of 25.50 pounds has been set as the cost to society per ton of carbon emissions. This means for example that if a new power station is to cost one billion pounds, you need to add 200 million pounds as the cost of the of carbon emissions. So the REAL cost of the power station is calculated at 1.2 billion.

On a much smaller scale green concierges are being used to help households count the costs of things like energy. As part of an initiative to reduce carbon emissions by 60 per cent by 2025, the mayor of London has just launched a 'green homes' service to help Londoners cut climate change emissions. The London Green Homes service offers a free telephone advice service and website and a 300€ per year green 'conciierge' service to provide a hassle-free tailor-made package of carbon saving lifestyle improvements. The tailor-made service provides a customised audit of a property, including a thermal image, and a 'blow door' test to identify sources of draughts; a report of recommended ways to reduce emissions; and, if wanted, full project management of a programme to cut emissions, including sourcing of competitive quotes.

The service side of the concierge system is managed by Ten UK who admit that many of their traditional clients are likely to drive a 5 series BMW and fly frequently. Many however also want to be seen to be green, and to sit at their dinner parties and talk about how cleverly they have slashed their carbon footprints. "But our job is not to be judgemental" says co-founder Andrew Long, "we're not going to tell you to stop flying, but if you are going to, at least sort your home out because not doing anything is unacceptable."

This unique consumer service currently subsidised by the government is expected to become standard practice across Britain in the next few years, and with it create demand for more green concierges.

www.greenconciergetravel.com

www.londonclimatechange.co.uk

www.greenhomesconciierge.co.uk

www.tenuk.com