



Part 3

The outcomes we have delivered through engaging with stakeholders

2021/22 Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive

Redacted Version



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Part 3

UK Power Networks is the UK’s largest electricity distributor, delivering power to 8.4 million homes and businesses across London, the east and south east of England.

Every year we take the opportunity through the Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) submission to summarise how engagement with our wide range of customers and stakeholders has led to real action – showcasing how insight informs the decisions we take, how we support our vulnerable customers and how we deliver positive outcomes for our customers, stakeholders and wider society.



Offering drop-in energy advice and support



Diverse FM sharing money and energy-saving advice with the faith community



Creative Energy Club sessions during half-term where mums completed National Energy Action training while their children created images that we could use in our outreach materials

Our submission is divided into three parts:

Part 1

Outlines our strategic approach to engaging and working with stakeholders as well as our strategy to support those in vulnerable circumstances.

Part 2

Demonstrates the impact we have delivered through engaging with our stakeholders across our key focus areas: empowering customers and communities to deliver Net Zero, enhancing our services, and keeping costs down through data-driven approaches.

Part 3

Explains how we understand our customers’ evolving needs and ensure that those in vulnerable circumstances receive the most impactful support.

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Some text has been redacted due to commercial sensitivity.

Focusing on delivering real impact

Two years into the pandemic, our understanding of vulnerability has fundamentally shifted. The pandemic has affected our customers’ lives in complex and far-reaching ways – from health and mental wellbeing, to work and income, to limitations on social interactions and access to face-to-face support. We have understood that customers are facing interconnected challenges which cannot be effectively addressed in isolation. This has influenced the way we think about our social role and has driven a holistic approach to our support – we are tackling a broad range of intersecting needs and social issues through our network of local trusted partners and making a real difference to our customers’ lives.

With energy bills and the cost of living rising, it is more important than ever that we identify and reach the customers who most need support. We have enhanced our data capabilities to deepen our understanding of customers’ needs, their characteristics and circumstances and the barriers they face. We are proud to work with passionate and insightful delivery partners who are enabling us to support 15,735 fuel poor customers, train 1,716 local energy advisers embedded in communities and invest in innovative approaches to tackle the barriers that prevent customers accessing support in the first place.

We are taking an active role in social sustainability in our industry – from truly embedding an ‘inclusion by design’ mindset in our business, prioritising accessibility in EV charging and new energy opportunities – to leading on Priority Services Register (PSR) automated data-sharing with water companies. Our programmes are making it easier for customers to receive the support they need. By working in collaboration with regional utilities, local government and third sector partners we are maximising the collective impact of our efforts. None of this would be possible on our own.

There is more to do. As we ramp up our efforts to deliver in-depth fuel poverty support to 500,000 customers by 2028, we continue to learn, adapt, and scale up the most impactful approaches. We will continue to embed an inclusive ethos as we head deeper into the Net Zero transition, to ensure all of our customers and communities can benefit from moving to a greener and more energy-efficient way of living.

Giulia Privitera, Social Sustainability Strategy and Programme Manager



How our submission has evolved this year

Explained our overall strategy in greater depth, exemplified with selected case studies, to demonstrate our holistic approach to vulnerability

Described in more detail how we understand the changing needs of our customers and communities

Provided more insight into how we use impact measurement tools to select partners and projects

Throughout our case studies we identify key insights gained through engagement, research and data.

Understanding customers’ changing needs

Our customers and communities are under enormous pressure. Triangulating insights from engagement, research, data and our network of local trusted partners has helped us understand these pressures and how they affect our customers’ vulnerability, which can be summarised as follows:

Rising costs mean more people are struggling to pay their bills

- National Energy Action estimates that **the number of households in fuel poverty across the UK will increase to over 6.5 million** as a result of changes to the price cap, **an increase of more than 50% in just over six months**. Resolution Foundation has reported the **largest fall in household incomes in 50 years**. An additional **360,000 households across our regions could enter fuel poverty over 2-3 years** as a result.
- Partners who work directly with communities told us **rising costs are compounding difficulties customers were already facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic**, including the impact of furlough and unemployment, the removal of the Universal Credit uplift and customer difficulties accessing the Warm Homes Discount. With greater time spent at home due to the pandemic, **many customers are using more energy and facing even higher costs to keep their homes warm**. Every aspect of household income is being squeezed, with **front-line organisations seeing little prospect of customers being able to work through rising costs debt-free**.

Mental health needs are intensifying due to the pandemic and financial stress

- Expert organisations on our CEO Panel, local delivery partners and our own research all reinforced that **more customers are facing mental health difficulties or experiencing their existing difficulties worsening**. Stresses from the pandemic and uncertain rising costs are causing **significant stress and anxiety for customers in vulnerable circumstances and front-line workers supporting them**.

Some customer groups are disproportionately affected by rising costs and need extra support in the transition to Net Zero

- Research by Scope found that **disabled households are disproportionately affected by higher energy prices**.
- Partners told us **private renters are at higher risk of disadvantage** due to mounting arrears and barriers to improving their low building energy efficiency. This leads to difficulties in managing their energy costs in the short term and making changes to their homes in the long term to transition to Net Zero.
- Research into the impact of COVID-19, carried out with South East Water, the Centre for Sustainable Energy and Sustainability First, identified **growing COVID-related illness and health inequalities, increasing the health risk of returning from hospital to a cold or damp home**. It is more important than ever that we support these customers to return to warm homes through energy advice and practical support.

This context provides us with vital intelligence that we can apply to our Consumer Vulnerability strategy, ensuring the support we provide to our customers is effective.

Key engagement insight

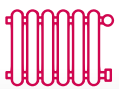
Customers believe that the vulnerable in our society should be looked after. Primary responsibility for that lies with the Government but there is a clear obligation on DNOs to address vulnerability within their sphere of operation.

Our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy

Our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy focuses on three pillars: managing and developing our PSR, tackling fuel poverty and providing inclusive services. These are underpinned by key enablers: maximising our partnerships, training our staff and innovating for all.



Managing and developing our Priority Services Register



Tackling fuel poverty



Providing inclusive services to ensure no one is left behind

Maximising our partnerships and training our staff
Innovating for all

Managing and developing our Priority Services Register



Social expectations that companies should know where and how they can support the most vulnerable in communities are ever rising. Our PSR helps us identify and provide extra care to those who need it and we work hard to promote and increase its effectiveness. This year we have continued to lead by example, working with organisations across and beyond our industry to catalyse coordinated action:

- Leading the way on rolling out real-time, fully-automated, two-way PSR data sharing with water companies**, so customers only need to tell one of us their details to receive priority services from utilities. We are pushing for a single national centralised and cross-sector PSR and have collaborated to build a practical demonstrator. We are also extending data sharing to emergency services, local authorities and third sector organisations in our regions.
- Scaling and sharing the most successful approaches** after learning from initial smaller-scale trials. For example, following last year’s trial, we have rolled out targeted Facebook posts to increase PSR registrations among under-represented groups in London.

Tackling fuel poverty



The scale and complexity of the fuel poverty challenge is substantial and we want to deliver more support to more people. We have committed to delivering seven times more in-depth support for households in or on the verge of entering fuel poverty across our areas by supporting 500,000 customers by 2028. To achieve this, we are ramping up our support and collaboration with others now. For example, this year we are:

- Giving customers a hand-up, not a hand-out**. Since tariff switching is no longer a reliable way to reduce costs, we have worked with our partners to adapt support to equip customers with practical tools and behaviour change to reduce energy usage to fill the gap left by tariff switching.
- Providing a joined-up service to tackle changing customer needs**. We are working to understand how consumer vulnerabilities intersect so we can provide tailored and impactful support. By enhancing the quality and openness of our data we can increase our collective understanding of customers’ needs and create coalitions within our regions to pool expertise and deliver coordinated support to our shared customers.

Providing inclusive services to ensure no one is left behind



It is important for us to ensure all our customers can benefit from the transition to Net Zero. We want to remove the barriers to taking part and ensure we reflect the needs of customers in vulnerable circumstances from the start. For example, this year we are:

- Investing in innovative approaches to tackle the barriers that prevent customers accessing support** in the first place. For example, we partnered with Lofty Heights to tackle the cycle of barriers where people who live in cluttered homes due to age-related or chronic health conditions become more socially isolated and are less likely to seek help.
- Embedding our ‘inclusion by design’ approach within governance processes** meaning that no project or programme is signed off by management, unless it describes how it ‘designs out’ barriers to inclusion from the start.

We take our social role very seriously. We are proud of the networks, partnerships and teams that work hard to deliver positive support to so many people. This document is dedicated to showcasing our strategy in action and demonstrates only a sample of the positive outcomes we have delivered for our customers and communities.

Our strategic enablers

Maximising our partnerships and training our staff

We are adapting our partnership support to match our customers’ changing needs, but simply increasing funding does not guarantee results; we focus our efforts to make a real and lasting difference. This year we have trained 1,716 energy champions and advisers in communities, providing lasting capability that endures beyond our funding rounds. Also, stakeholders encourage us to act to prevent customers in vulnerable situations and the fuel poor being left behind in the energy system transition. So we focus on using our effective partnerships to provide advice and actionable support to enable participation.

Innovating for all

We established a new cross-cutting enabler of ‘innovating for all’ to bring new ideas to our focus areas. This is reflected in our decision to bring together our vulnerability, innovation and engagement teams under a single senior manager. Our aim is to combine innovative thinking with vulnerability insights to design new approaches that support all our customers and enable an inclusive Net Zero transition. For example, we are increasing customer access and participation in domestic demand-side response, unlocking wider participation in the Net Zero transition, and taking an advanced data-led approach to identify households in or entering fuel poverty at street level.

Maximising our impact through partnerships and training

189

active partners
69 new partnerships
this year

117

hours invested
engaging with
utilities partners

17,634

partner/staff
training hours
(+40% on
20/21)

1,716

front-line energy
advisers trained
this year

Our partnership approach

We recognise we are not always best placed to directly deliver the support our customers require, so we partner to ensure customers receive a complete and rounded service. To maximise the impact of our consumer vulnerability programmes, our approach is to partner with like-minded organisations who:

- Share our values and vulnerability principles
- Are able to reach seldom-heard and hard-to-reach
- Can deliver real impact for our customers
- Are innovative and drive the frontier with us
- Have the ability to scale
- Are open to reciprocal learning opportunities

Our approach includes both enhancing our ongoing partnerships and creating new and evolving relationships with a range of organisations, giving flexibility to address and adapt to a wide range of changing circumstances and barriers that customers face. Each year we review our partnerships against our customers' changing needs, conducting a gap analysis against our existing offerings.

Our partnerships are categorised into **Delivery, Strategic, Industry** and **Referral Partners** depending on the role they play, and are organised into three geographical tiers: **cross-regional partners**; **regional partners** that serve customers across a single region; and **local partners** that serve customers in local areas. This model allows us to target local issues and to scale support across our regions.

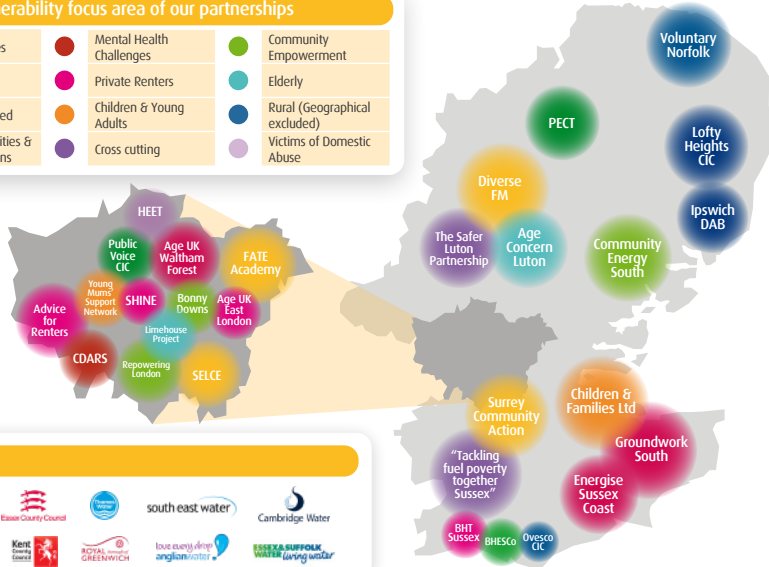
This year we have further strengthened our partnership approach by focusing on more joined-up approaches with other utilities, including energy suppliers, other DNOs, gas networks, water companies and local authorities.

2021/22 Active Partnerships



Key - main vulnerability focus area of our partnerships

Ethnic Minorities	Mental Health Challenges	Community Empowerment
Emerging Vulnerabilities	Private Renters	Elderly
Digitally excluded	Children & Young Adults	Rural (Geographical excluded)
Physical Disabilities & Health Conditions	Cross cutting	Victims of Domestic Abuse



Regional Partners

Learning from partners to ensure customers do not miss out on support

Energy suppliers are an important partner in registering and updating customer details on the PSR. Through engaging with energy suppliers, our staff, who are empowered to respond to emerging issues in the course of delivering their core UKPN roles, identified a risk that customers transferred under the Supplier of Last Resort (SoLR) arrangements might miss out on PSR support, since their new supplier might not necessarily re-register them on the PSR automatically. Given the high volume of customers being moved to a new supplier over the last six months, we investigated this further.

However, our data analysis identified that less than 1% of SoLR customers in our areas were not re-registered on the PSR. Whilst our investigation found that this was not a systemic problem, it demonstrates we take

our duty of care to our customers seriously. We proactively contacted the 2,312 customers as a result to confirm whether they were removed from the PSR by mistake and re-registered over 6%, ensuring they continue to receive priority support where needed.

Outcome

✔ Contacted 2,312 SoLR customers and re-registered over 6% to ensure they continue to receive priority support where needed



"UKPN's support has contributed to our community capacity building efforts in a number of ways, mainly through the training and support of frontline workers and volunteers. In 2021, for example, the total number of attendees on our online training sessions reached over 170."

Aryanisha Lawes, Project Manager, Repowering London

Investing in our communities to deliver sustainable impact

THE CHALLENGE

The Power Partners funding we provide annually is time-bound, so we need to focus our investment on building sustainable capacity that will continue to benefit communities beyond the funding. This is especially important as the number of customers in fuel poverty grows.

WHAT WE DID

This year we supported partners even more to invest in training energy champions and front-line workers embedded in communities, providing fuel poverty advice and support on an enduring basis. For example:

- Enabling **Community Energy South** to transfer their well-established experience from the South East to upskill four community energy groups in Essex to deliver fuel poverty and energy resilience support across a year-long programme. Sharing experience between delivery organisations helps enhance the capabilities of Essex community energy groups to deliver ongoing local support
- Working with **Brighton Housing Trust (BHT) Sussex** to train ten front line staff in four supported living projects focusing on young people in vulnerable circumstances such as former homeless people applying for jobs and those with complex mental health needs or recovering from addiction. In addition, training eight tenants to become energy champions to work with their neighbours and community, fostering mutual support
- Launching the **Bonny Downs Community Association** drop-in Energy Advocacy Surgery during their weekly food bank to give disadvantaged adults of all ages support with income maximisation and signposting to wraparound services. Additionally, offering a befriending service and three days per week of 1-2-1 follow up advice appointments for

40 elderly vulnerable people who are digitally excluded and require additional personalised support.

Enduring impact delivered by previous Power Partners rounds

- Diverse FM**, a multi-cultural community radio station serving the top nine most deprived wards in Luton has upskilled 10 energy champions and hired energy advisers providing ongoing energy support in several languages not available before.
- Repowering London** has multiplied the impact of its work: each energy champion trained has trained nine single parents as energy champions. Our ongoing partnership with Repowering London has resulted in 112 energy champions over two years.

Outcomes

- ✔ 1,716 front-line workers and energy champions trained this year, with an additional 521 currently in training across our latest Power Partners projects
- ✔ 112 community energy champions trained via our Repowering London 'train the trainer' approach – developing ongoing capacity and capability for our communities
- ✔ 3,432 training hours delivered to front-line workers and energy champions on energy resilience support

Our holistic approach to training

THE CHALLENGE

Through our vulnerability forums, stakeholders told us that comprehensive training on vulnerability issues is essential to develop an organisational culture that takes effective action.

WHAT WE DID

We took a holistic approach to evaluating what kind of training would be most beneficial to our staff based on their role and their interaction with customers, embedding our 'inclusion by design' ethos:

- Contact centre advisers:** We reviewed the training package ensuring that all contact centre staff are trained as mental health first aiders. We scaled the in-depth "End the awkward" training on supporting our disabled customers, developed in partnership with Scope, and continued our partnership with AVA (Against Violence & Abuse) to train advisers to identify and refer victims of domestic abuse to national abuse helplines and local support services
- Wider call handlers:** During storms, specially-trained staff across the wider business step up to support customers by taking calls. We have introduced dedicated vulnerability storm roles such as community welfare and managers that assign generators, to identify and deliver the specific support that PSR customers need in exceptionally long power outages
- Customer-facing field staff:** All our engineers are given a vulnerability app as part of their training, which equips them to provide an enhanced service to our PSR customers on their doorstep. This includes translation tools and interpreter services, including BSL, access to request on-site support during a power cut, PSR registration and partner referrals
- Senior leaders:** We embedded vulnerability awareness up to executive level by training senior managers of customer-facing teams, including training on the social model of disability delivered by Scope.

We also surveyed our **partners** to understand what training they would find most useful and learned they wanted to understand more about Net Zero, what it means for consumers and how they can support them in the future. As a result, we joined BEIS, SGN, the Heat Pump Federation and Citizens Advice to support front-line workers in the South East. Inviting all our partners in the region to participate, we trained 60 energy advisers, front-line and local authority workers on Net Zero, raising awareness of the support we provide to vulnerable customers and sharing practical guidance on the information available to front-line staff and their clients. Building on this approach, we are also creating a training package covering mental health training and benefits measurement calculations.

Outcomes

- ✔ Greater support for PSR customers during exceptional weather events through ring-fenced vulnerability specialists – delivering 90,000 prepare text messages, 12,600 proactive outbound calls and 11,000 hot meals and hotels
- ✔ 60 front-line workers and advisers trained on Net Zero and the support available to vulnerable customers

7,190 hours of disability awareness training delivered to staff, enabling an estimated social value of £1.68 for customers in vulnerable circumstance over and above every £1 spent over 10 years, based on unlocking quality of life benefits



Our PSR strategy

Having reached our 2020/21 target of 40% of eligible households registered in each of our 124 districts, with input from our stakeholders we have further increased that target to 60% by the end of RII0-ED1. In addition, we have worked hard to define a cross-industry eligibility definition so all UK customers receive an equitable service. The results will shape our long-term target of 85% of eligible customers registered by 2028 – three times higher than our initial RII0-ED1 target. We take a data-driven approach to identify and target the least-represented areas to ensure no district is left behind, including tailoring support for PSR customers to reflect how they are affected by power cuts. Our approach is wider than simply aiming for the biggest overall number.

Understand	Data	Partners	Learn	Outcome
2.1m, 60% of eligible households in our regions registered on our PSR (+6.48% on 20/21)	678,237 customers contacted and 532,739 information records updated on a 18-month contact cycle	15,372 more PSR registrations through our fuel poverty and referral partners	6,210,000 interactions with customers on the PSR this year	93.7% PSR customer satisfaction
3,495,511 PSR eligible households identified	189,391 customer details removed through cleansing (+27% on 20/21)	100% PSR needs codes supported through our partnerships	Direct PSR registration and update channels 32% website (+0%) 44% phone (-8%) 14% post (-1%) 10% water data (new)	82% PSR customers restored within 1 hour in a power cut
67% 83/124 districts met new target of minimum 60% of eligible households registered (up 51% from 20/21)	26,192 PSR records automatically shared with water companies in the first 6 months	29 location-specific partners covering top 20% most under-represented districts	25% increase in PSR uptake against mental health needs codes	32% reduction in cost for PSR eligible customers to make supply alterations supporting their needs

Closing the PSR uptake gap in London



THE CHALLENGE

London was under-represented in our PSR by 9% when compared to our East and South East regions. Our research last year found families with young children, elderly customers and those with low proficiency in English in London are under-represented on our PSR. We need to continue to refine our approach to reach our target of closing the gap by 2023.

WHAT WE DID

We built on last year’s London-wide PSR awareness campaign to reflect stakeholder agreement that people tend not to identify themselves as vulnerable. We targeted support networks to ensure people they care for are not missing out on support and reached 566,398 readers, more than seven times higher than last year’s campaign.

We trialled and scaled tailored campaigns to increase registrations of under-represented customer groups and areas:

Approach	Reach
Targeted Facebook ads tailored to four groups: the elderly, families with young children, those with health issues, carers and support networks	6,441 unique clicks (+16% from last year)
Scaled last year’s trial PSR campaign with five social media influencers to reach families with young children, disabled people and those with elderly relatives	3,912 total interactions including unique page visits, likes and comments
Partnered with the Young Mums’ Support Network to engage with mothers using messages co-designed in one of the least-represented boroughs for young families	1,200 families reached
Targeted leafleting campaign in six of the most-spoken languages in specific boroughs for those who do not engage with social media and do not speak English	3,866 unique page visits
Continued to offer automated PSR alerts for customers using Policy in Practice’s ‘Benefits and Budget calculator’	235 unique page visits

Outcomes

- 48,546 net increase in PSR registrations across London, closing the London gap to 6%
- 53.4% of eligible London households registered on the PSR, up from 49.8% last year
- 7% more registrations than last year’s London-wide campaign

“You guys are doing a very good job in supporting our community in London. We feel that we are left behind by companies that don’t take into consideration those who don’t speak English. It’s great to see that you are tailoring your services to the different communities you serve.”

Arabic & Urdu-speaking customer

Rolling out automated PSR data sharing with water companies

DNO First



THE CHALLENGE

There is no single approach which allows customers to register for priority support with one utility and automatically be registered with the others. Engagement with partners and vulnerability experts told us cross utility web-forms stand to exclude other effective registration channels. In the absence of collective industry progress, last year we worked to clarify the suitable lawful basis for data sharing and provide a joined-up, “register once” service.

WHAT WE DID

Working with Thames Water and Northumbrian Water, we built, tested and implemented the first fully-automated, real-time, two-way PSR data share. Through data analysis, we learned that 97% of customers who register with their water company need additional support beyond the water needs code. During design we identified the risk of unintentionally overwriting critical data as a result of this automated process. After analysis, we identified that 88% of records could be processed without human intervention without risking critical data loss. We monitored data for six months to gain confidence in the approach and are now sharing new PSR registrations from water with energy suppliers. We are working with the remaining water companies in our areas to scale the approach.

We shared our approach with other DNOs and water companies nationally to catalyse wider action, and now have five additional water companies scheduled to start sharing data automatically with us.



“UK Power Networks are the only DNO Thames Water have integrated PSR data with to date. Our partnership has innovation and vulnerable customers at its heart. These two elements are driving significant and measurable outcomes for our shared vulnerable customers.”

Olivia Worthington, Partnering Lead – Vulnerability, Thames Water

We are determined to continue spearheading the industry to deliver improved joined-up support, for example by:

- Extending the collaboration to others – together with Thames Water we have engaged 17 organisations to set up an Essential Sharing Network to trial in London, allowing data sharing with wider statutory bodies such as emergency services, local authorities and third sector organisations
- Being the industry voice – advocating for the pressing need for a centralised cross-sector PSR to act as a ‘single source of the truth’
- Developing a proof of concept – Collaborating in intensive sprints with Northumbrian Water and 35 other utility and non-utility partners to design and build a cross-sector PSR hub demonstrator.

Outcomes

- 26,192 PSR records shared bi-directionally between water companies and UKPN in the first months of launching
- 4,047 new PSR registrations and 2,208 information updates for us – and 5,385 new PSR registrations for water companies

Estimated social value of £2.39 for PSR customers over and above every £1 spent over 10 years, based on our bespoke PSR support financial proxy



Promoting additional support for our PSR customers

DNO First



THE CHALLENGE

Customers who are medically-dependent on electricity are amongst those at highest risk during a power cut. Recognising the impact of the energy crisis, we wanted to offer more proactive advice to our PSR customers who are more likely to struggle financially.

WHAT WE DID

Promoting smart meter uptake by medically-dependent customers

Stakeholders encouraged us to utilise smart meter capabilities to alleviate stress during a power cut, particularly for medically-dependent customers. Smart meters tell us if a customer is off-supply without them contacting us, and we can automatically alert the customer and their support contacts. Building on the DNO-first integration of smart meters with our communication channels last year, we now proactively confirm if a power cut is network-related or an issue with the customer’s or supplier’s equipment, without the customer needing to do anything. However, engagement with our Inclusive Customer Panel found that 75% of them were not aware of the benefits of smart meters during a power cut.

Engagement with energy suppliers taught us they are not specifically targeting medically dependent customers for smart meter installation because of the potential impact of turning off power during installation. However, our research showed that the most common medical equipment has back-up power to cover short-term outages of 2 to 12 hours.

We therefore engaged with Smart Energy GB, who are responsible for the national communications campaign for smart meters, to co-design tailored messages to promote the benefits to medically-dependent customers. We tested draft communications with our Inclusive Customer Panel and found that 67% would consider installing a smart meter as a result.

Since Smart Energy GB, suppliers, and ourselves all play a role in communicating with customers about smart meters, we have joined forces to trial different approaches to understand which organisational ‘face’ and channels work best to reach medically-dependent PSR customers.

Proactive energy advice

In the context of soaring energy bills, we promoted enhanced support available to customers:

- Set up a dedicated Energy Advice Line for our customers, run by AgilityEco
- Proactively shared details of support services with 16,142 PSR customers in 47 local areas with high levels of fuel poverty
- Provided disabled PSR customers in these areas with link to the Scope Disability Energy Support and water advice service, funded in partnership with SGN and Anglian Water.

Outcomes

- 3,381 customers received free help on energy and water savings through Scope Disability Energy Services and UK Power Networks’ Energy Advice Line, delivering £72,492 estimated savings to customers in the first year
- 1,339 (8%) of customers in fuel poor areas sought support as a result of our proactive contact

Estimated social value of £0.59 for medically dependent customers adopting smart meters, over and above every £1 spent over 10 years, based on reduced stress during outages



Our strategy to tackle fuel poverty


Stakeholder engagement has driven our ambition to increase support by seven times compared to our 2021 baseline, supporting 100,000 households with our regional partners per year in or at risk of being in fuel poverty between 2023 and 2028. To make this a reality, we are ramping up our efforts across the three building blocks of our fuel poverty strategy:

Breadth:	Depth:	Enduring support:
Providing general fuel poverty advice by signposting to resources (e.g. energy efficiency advice) and supporting partners at community events. This preventative approach is intended to reach a wide range of customers either in or at risk of fuel poverty	Through a combination of data and community partners, we identify customers who would most benefit from in-depth personalised one-to-one support. Partners then spend time to provide help tailored to individuals' circumstances, empowering them to take practical steps such as applying for benefits and grants, saving energy and installing energy efficient appliances	Supporting partners to train energy champions, advisers and front-line workers embedded in communities to provide fuel poverty advice and enduring support to maximise enduring impact
897,870 customers reached (+7% on 20/21)	15,735 customers reached (+14% on 20/21) and 18,360 hours of support delivered	1,716 front-line workers and energy champions trained in 21/22, with 521 more expected next year through 'train the trainer'
£2.80m saving to new PSR customers	£1.64m first year saving	3,432 training hours delivered on energy resilience support and 5,645 customers signed up to the PSR by fuel poverty partners
£7.15 average saving per new PSR customer	£7.65m saving over five year period	
£480,386 saving to customers updating PSR details	£1.49m additional social and wellbeing benefits over five years	
£1.03m saving via our partners	£97.24 average annual saving per customer for five years	
£17.48 average saving per customer		

Savings estimated using bespoke proxies and actual attribution rates from our projects

We deliver this strategy by:

Building a sustainable ecosystem of partnerships with local trusted organisations; evaluating and prioritising where to focus and maximise impact by using data on customer needs and barriers, feedback from delivery partners and evaluating past initiatives; and providing personalised support to help address a wide range of complex and interrelated circumstances many customers face.



“As increasing numbers of people are facing challenging circumstances, it is more important than ever to work in partnership with other organisations to identify those who need help. We have worked in partnership with UKPN over the last few years and see this new framework as an exciting next step in our work together to help those who need it most.”

Rachel Ryan-Crisp, Vulnerability Lead, Southern Water

Maximising support where it’s needed most



THE CHALLENGE

Insights from vulnerability experts, our fuel poverty partners, horizon scanning and our COVID-19 impact research highlighted that due to the energy supply crisis, rising cost of living and ongoing impacts of the pandemic, **more and more people are struggling to pay their bills**. In particular:

- **Tariff switching is no longer an option to reduce energy bills**
- **Customers are facing increasingly complex and difficult circumstances.** Partners told us the time they spend delivering personalised in-depth support has doubled
- **Mental health needs are increasing due to the pandemic and the rising cost of living**
- **Private renters are at risk of being left behind in a ‘two-tier’ recovery due to mounting arrears, lower energy efficiency, and barriers to making changes to their homes.**

WHAT WE DID

We awarded more energy resilience projects in our latest Power Partners round than ever before, with 16 projects selected compared to a previous maximum of 9. This round tackles a range of complex and overlapping needs and offer targeted support to 4,060 customers and general advice to 11,324 people. Combined with our previous Power Partners rounds, bespoke partnerships and well-established fuel poverty programmes, we launched a total of 36 fuel poverty initiatives this year, supporting 15,735 customers across our regions. Below we highlight examples of how we have adapted the support delivered.

Enhanced practical support

- Partners are increasingly focusing on practical measures and behaviour change to help customers improve energy efficiency, maximise their income and reduce energy consumption. For example, Ovesco are reaching households via community events and refugee groups, providing **200 heat saving kits** of secondary glazing, draught proofing and radiator-reflector kits to reduce heat loss and energy usage.
- Our London region is the most ethnically diverse in England and Wales, with 40.2% of residents identifying as either Asian, Black, Mixed or Other ethnic groups compared to less than 10% in the East and South East. Building on our previous work with ethnic minority groups, for example with Diverse FM and the Faith and Power project, we are partnering with South East London Community Energy (SELCE) to deliver energy advice in Arabic, Turkish, Bengali, Yoruba, Spanish and French. We are also providing 200 customers with **practical kits and instructions** to improve energy and water efficiency, or home visits where customers cannot install the measures themselves. We are also partnering with the Limehouse Project to reach elderly residents whose first language is not English, providing energy advice, food parcels and wellbeing programmes.

Outcomes

- ✓ **Building on last year’s partnership with the NEA ‘Pioneered by energy’ programme’, we have now embedded support programmes for refugees**
- ✓ **Developed alternatives to plug the void left from energy tariff switching, using alternative practical measures to understand their relative effectiveness in delivering impact**

Mental health

- Our partners have **quickly formed capabilities to support growing mental health needs**, which are often made worse by financial worries including rising energy bills. We funded partners to enhance the mental health support they offer, either in-house or via referral pathways. For example, Groundworks London refers clients to Mind for specialist mental health support, and Mind refers clients to Groundworks London for in-depth energy support.
- Recognising the causes of fuel poverty are complex and interconnected, we partnered with Community Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services (CDARS) to support customers affected by **mental health and substance misuse as well as complex needs** such as unemployment, poor housing conditions and marginalisation. As part of a holistic approach, CDARS delivers fuel poverty and energy saving advice and supports customers to access the benefits they are entitled to.

Outcomes

- ✓ **Over 100 customers suffering from mental health issues offered support through our cross-partner referral approach when compared to traditional silo approaches, reducing the burden on NHS mental health referrals by up to £55 per person supported**
- ✓ **Delivering double (660) the volume of energy savings advice for customers suffering from mental health and substance abuse building on the success of initiatives delivered in 2020/21**

Private renters and ‘hidden’ private homeowners

- Supporting 300 tenants in the **private rented sector** in Hounslow by scaling last year’s successful trial in Brent with Advice For Renters. This will provide energy, legal and debt advice, mentoring to tenants and training for community leaders in deprived parts of Hounslow where black and minority ethnic communities are over-represented, including higher levels of refugees, disability and long-term health conditions.
- **Matched partners with complementary strengths.** We enabled a partnership between HEET and SHINE to co-design tailored fuel poverty advice for private renters so HEET’s successful approach in Waltham Forest could be replicated across London and beyond using SHINE’s proven ability to scale support (6,621 customers supported with in-depth advice this year). We learned that it works well to create materials which can be provided to other partners to support their own delivery and we will continue with this approach next year by sharing this targeted advice with eight other fuel poverty partners.
- Lofty Heights highlighted barriers facing people who live in **cluttered, hoarded and cold homes** due to age-related or chronic health conditions, including ‘hidden’ private homeowners. They can become socially isolated and less likely to seek help, with their health issues made worse by their living conditions. We are partnering with Lofty Heights to provide decluttering, practical energy and heating improvements, signposting to local support and PSR registration to 300 customers.

Outcomes

- ✓ **Over 300 customers living in cold cluttered or hoarded homes receive practical energy and heating improvements following our decluttering support**
- ✓ **849 private renters supported with energy, legal and debt advice in Brent through our partnership with Advice for Renters – now increased to an additional 300 private renters in Hounslow**

Estimated social value of £0.94 to 6,000 private renters, over and above every £1 spent to support SHINE and HEET’s partnership over 10 years, based on bill savings, quality of life and health benefits



Providing inclusive services to ensure no one is left behind

1.58m

customers at risk of not benefitting or being left behind in the energy transition by 2030

13,643

customers provided with more accessible support

395,000

disabled motorists at risk of being left behind in the EV transition

Embedding inclusion by design

Scaling up

THE CHALLENGE

Our stakeholders encouraged us to rethink the way we viewed vulnerability. Learning from the social model of disability, which describes how people are disabled by barriers in society and not their impairment, we have greater consideration of **vulnerability being driven by the interplay of multiple factors including energy system barriers and personal circumstances**. This led us to develop our Socially Green mapping tool, which helps us forecast where and when customers will face various barriers.

Driven by stakeholder feedback, this year we wanted to take further the Socially Green (SG) model we developed last year by embedding it into our governance, so we can tackle systemic barriers from the start by designing more inclusive and accessible solutions.

WHAT WE DID

Our Vulnerability team have used the SG mapping tool to inform our future Vulnerability Strategy and existing programme. We have trained staff in our Innovation, Capital Programmes, Flexibility and Business Planning teams, who develop initiatives and solutions focusing on customer groups. For example, in our complex large-scale development project to increase power capacity for future demand in Central Bedfordshire, we are using

insights into the characteristics of the community to develop local support programmes with the local authority, schools and Scouts during construction works.

Following the training we embedded the SG mapping tool into our innovation governance process, providing a framework to ensure we consider not just customer characteristics, but also the barriers they may face, along with insights from bespoke mapping and forecasting data across our regions, ahead of approval.

Outcomes

- ✓ Structured framework embedded in governance ensures we design initiatives with inclusion in mind from the start
- ✓ 38 staff trained in interrogating our Socially Green tool to understand barriers and circumstances customers and communities face
- ✓ A tailored support programme developed to increase community engagement with environmental sustainability

Leaving no one behind today

Collaboration

THE CHALLENGE

There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to tackling barriers to inclusion, so we design partnerships tailored to the needs of customer groups at higher risk at being left behind. Below we highlight examples of the initiatives we selected through our Power Partners programme.

WHAT WE DID

Customers leaving hospital

Our research into the impact of the pandemic identified that **more people are experiencing COVID-related health issues and respiratory illnesses, increasing the health risk when returning to a cold or damp home**. We partnered with organisations such as Public Voice CIC, Imago and BHESCo to support customers recovering from health issues. For example, Public Voice CIC leverages its established relationships with Haringey Council’s Multi-Agency Care and Coordination Team and Reablement Team to refer customers to energy advice.

Outcomes

- ✓ 2,813 customers recovering from health issues received energy support, saving them £131,681 in the first year

Tackling digital exclusion

Our data modelling highlighted that **digital exclusion often overlaps with older age, rural location and low income so we formed partnerships tailored to these characteristics**:

- Partnered with Age UK Waltham Forest to deliver beginners’ digital classes and mobile phone workshops, income maximisation and befriending
- Energise Sussex Coast set up a successful befriending service during the pandemic to tackle social isolation for digitally excluded people.

Outcomes

- ✓ Reduced digital barriers for 3,301 hard-to-reach customers

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

Engagement with partners identified that **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are at risk of being left behind** due to a higher prevalence of housing and benefits support and challenges accessing services. So we partnered with Surrey Community Action as a trial project to develop better insight into how these customers use energy, so we can understand what support would be most useful in future.

Outcomes

- ✓ Increased understanding around the needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, guiding our tailored support programmes

Leaving no one behind tomorrow: public charging access for all

Leadership

THE CHALLENGE

Our vision is to enable the Net Zero transition for all. Customers in vulnerable circumstances may face additional barriers to benefitting from low carbon technologies, for example, due to lack of affordability, accessibility and understanding of their options. National Energy Action told us that ensuring customer groups are not left behind is not enough; we must design services with vulnerability in mind.

WHAT WE DID

Motability advised that by 2030, 395,000 Blue Badge holders in our regions will be partially or wholly reliant on on-street charging infrastructure. Those on the Motability scheme lease a car every three years and are likely to go electric earlier than forecasts expect. Following engagement with Motability, and building on our wider on-street charging initiative, we launched a project to define our role in supporting disabled customers who rely on public charging in their transition to electric vehicles (EVs).

Our research with 1,000 disabled motorists in our areas found **physical, infrastructural and informational barriers limit the accessibility of on-street charging for disabled motorists**. These include lack of consideration that chargepoints need to be close to home and lack of consideration of disabled customers’ needs in chargepoint design. Engaging with chargepoint operators, local authorities and Transport for London, we learned that **barriers in the current business model need to be addressed to enhance the rollout of charging infrastructure for disabled customers**. Local authorities told us that we could support a more coordinated approach through **greater knowledge sharing, dedicated points of contact and proactive planning and monitoring**.

We engaged to test the potential roles we could play, so we could move from learning to implementing a plan of action:

- We published the learnings on our dedicated Accessible Transport hub tailoring the content to audiences such as local authorities, charge point operators and disabled customers, to ensure it is easily accessible.
- We joined key stakeholders to steer the development of accessible charging infrastructure standards, which is jointly sponsored by Motability and the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV). The standards will be produced via the British Standards Institution this year.

- We continue to advocate for the on-street charging needs of disabled customers and encourage third party service aggregators, such as smart charging providers, to consider including disabled on-street charging bays in their flexibility services.
- We continue to take a coordinated approach through proactive data sharing and dedicated engagement with local authorities on the on-street charging needs of disabled motorists. We will publish Open Data on the density of Blue Badge holders at granular Lower Super Output Area level to inform local authorities’ strategic planning of EV charging infrastructure provision and our own demand modelling.

We are now investigating trials of potential approaches to enhance the business case for accessible charging to ensure these customers are not left behind.

Outcomes

- ✓ A clear understanding of our role to unlock public charging for 395,000 blue badge holders
- ✓ Only DNO to co-develop accessible charging infrastructure standards published by the BSI

Estimated social value of £2.01 for disabled motorists over and above every £1 spent over 10 years, based on financial savings from switching to EVs, lower CO2 emissions and improved air quality

“UK Power Networks’ ‘Enable’ research project, supported by Motability, highlighted that DNOs can potentially play an important role in making sure that on-street EV charging in particular is accessible for disabled people. The coordination involved in providing accessible charging is incredibly complex and a shared responsibility and UK Power Networks have shown that DNOs can step up to the mark in leading and facilitating this change”

Catherine Marris, Head of Innovation at Motability



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