



Communicating with Vulnerable Customers

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Communicating with Vulnerable Customers

- E.ON UK – Who we are
- What we do for vulnerable customers
 - Vulnerable
 - Vulnerable by means of sensory impairment or mental health and customers who's first language is not English

Working with others

Who are we?

E.ON UK

- Part of E.ON group – the largest privately owned energy company in the World.
- 2nd largest energy supplier with over 8.7 million customers
- 2nd largest electricity generator with 25 generation sites
- 2nd largest distribution network
- We own and manage the Powergen brand

Powergen

2nd largest of the energy suppliers in the UK

- Supplier of both domestic and business to business
- Around 8.75 million customers on supply
- Around 6 million domestic and small business



POWERGEN

A company of **e.on**

CaringEnergy

At Powergen we're committed to helping vulnerable customers achieve affordable warmth in their homes.

As part of that commitment we launched CaringEnergy in Feb 2006

CaringEnergy offers vulnerable customers a straightforward route into the range of products, measures and services we offer which aim to reduce energy bills, improve energy efficiency, increase household income and affordably heat homes.

Vulnerable Energy Customers

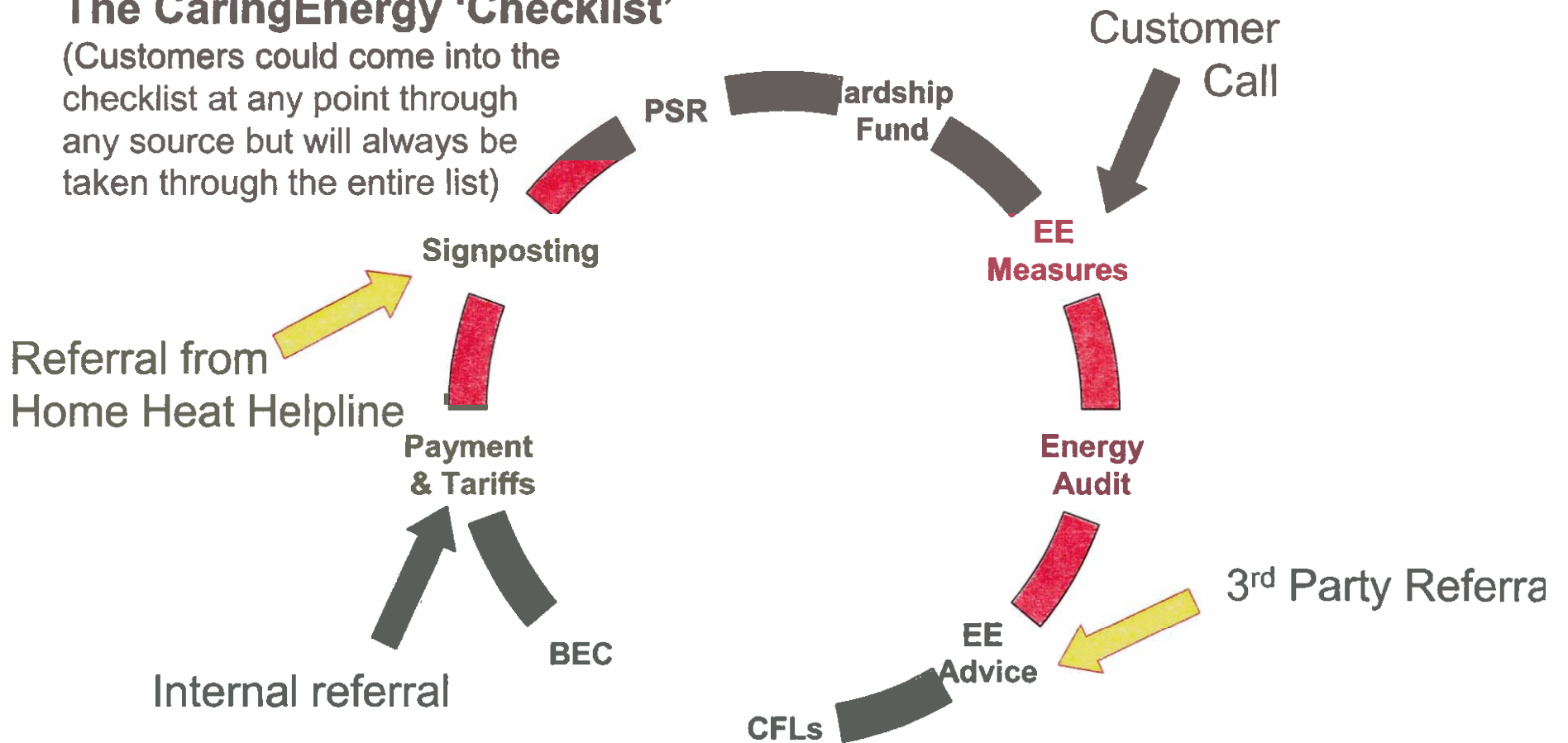
Vulnerable energy customers are generally seen to be those in the following groups:

- Elderly customers
- People with disabilities or long term sickness
- Families with young children
- Low income households
- Households in receipt of benefits and tax-credits which qualify for the Energy Efficiency Commitment Priority Group

We can offer many of the CaringEnergy products, measures and services to all vulnerable Powergen customers – whether they own their own home or rent.

The CaringEnergy 'Checklist'

(Customers could come into the checklist at any point through any source but will always be taken through the entire list)



How do we know?

When trying to identify those vulnerable through Fuel Poverty we can use tools such as:

- Indices of deprivation
- Social mapping
- Local Knowledge
- And other methods

Identifies areas where there is a higher likelihood of fuel poverty/vulnerability we can then concentrate efforts through regular routes, mail drops, local papers and schemes such as Heatstreets

But. . . .

How do we know?

We rely on information from the customer and/or others to be able to identify those vulnerable through sensory impairment, mental health problems or where English is not the first language.

- Customers not always willing to let us know
- Third parties not always comfortable in giving info (Data Protection, Sales)
- Call centre staff not always “tuned in” to the needs/signs
- Sometimes the first we know is late on in the debt process (once we know the debt process will be handled by our Vulnerable Customer credit Management Team)

Communicating with groups with Sensory impairment Mental Health problems or those whose first language is not Eng

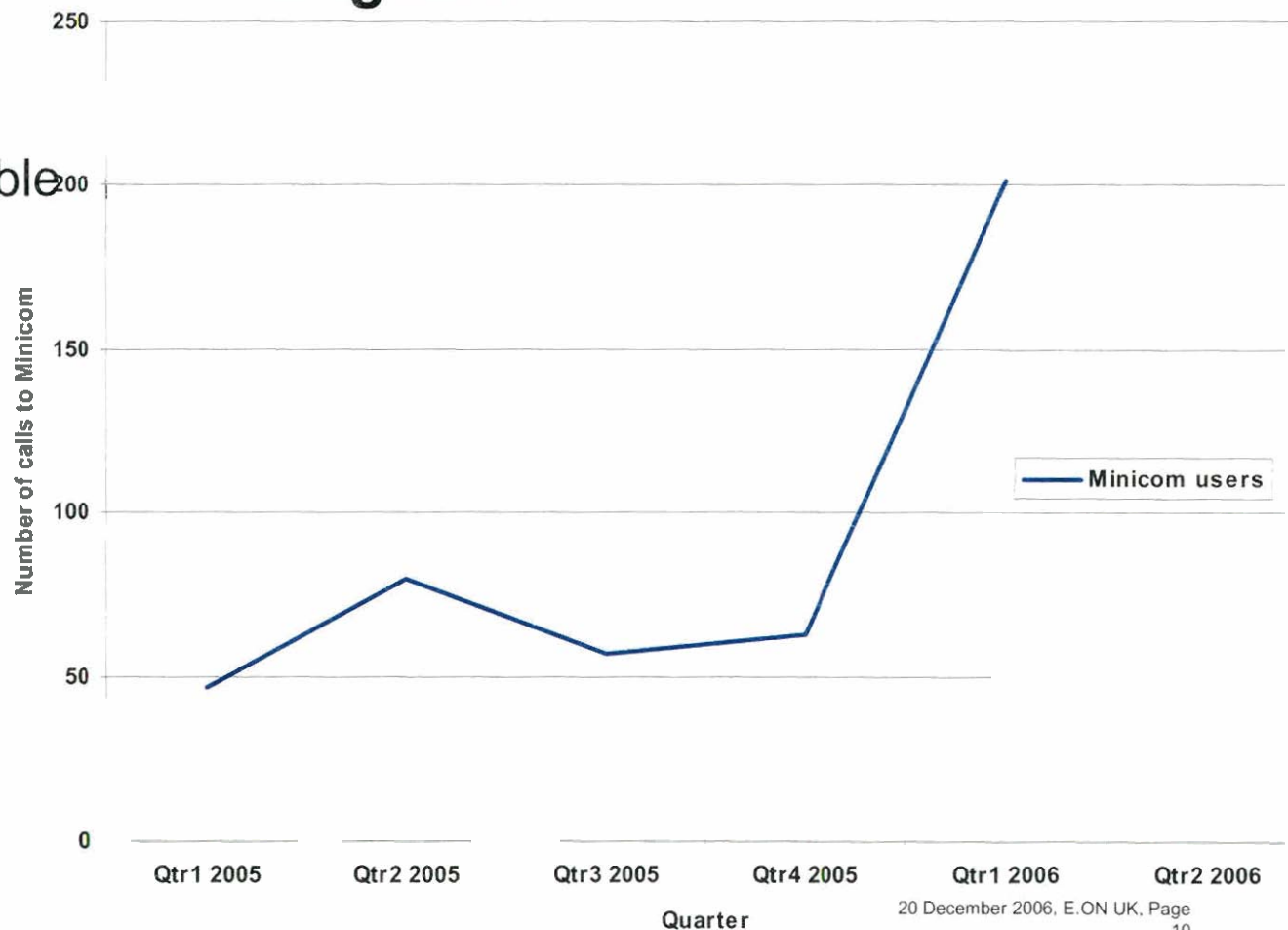
Braille and Large print bills

- Delivered through a third party specialistists.
- Braille bills and correspondence
- Large print bills up to 24 point size.
- Registered when requested.
- Currently **1741** registered on Gas, **4163** Electricity
- But what's best practice?
- Recent communication threw up a number of challenges to what we currentl
- Open to suggestions

Communicating with groups with Sensory impairment or Mental Health problems or those whose first language is not English.

Minicom

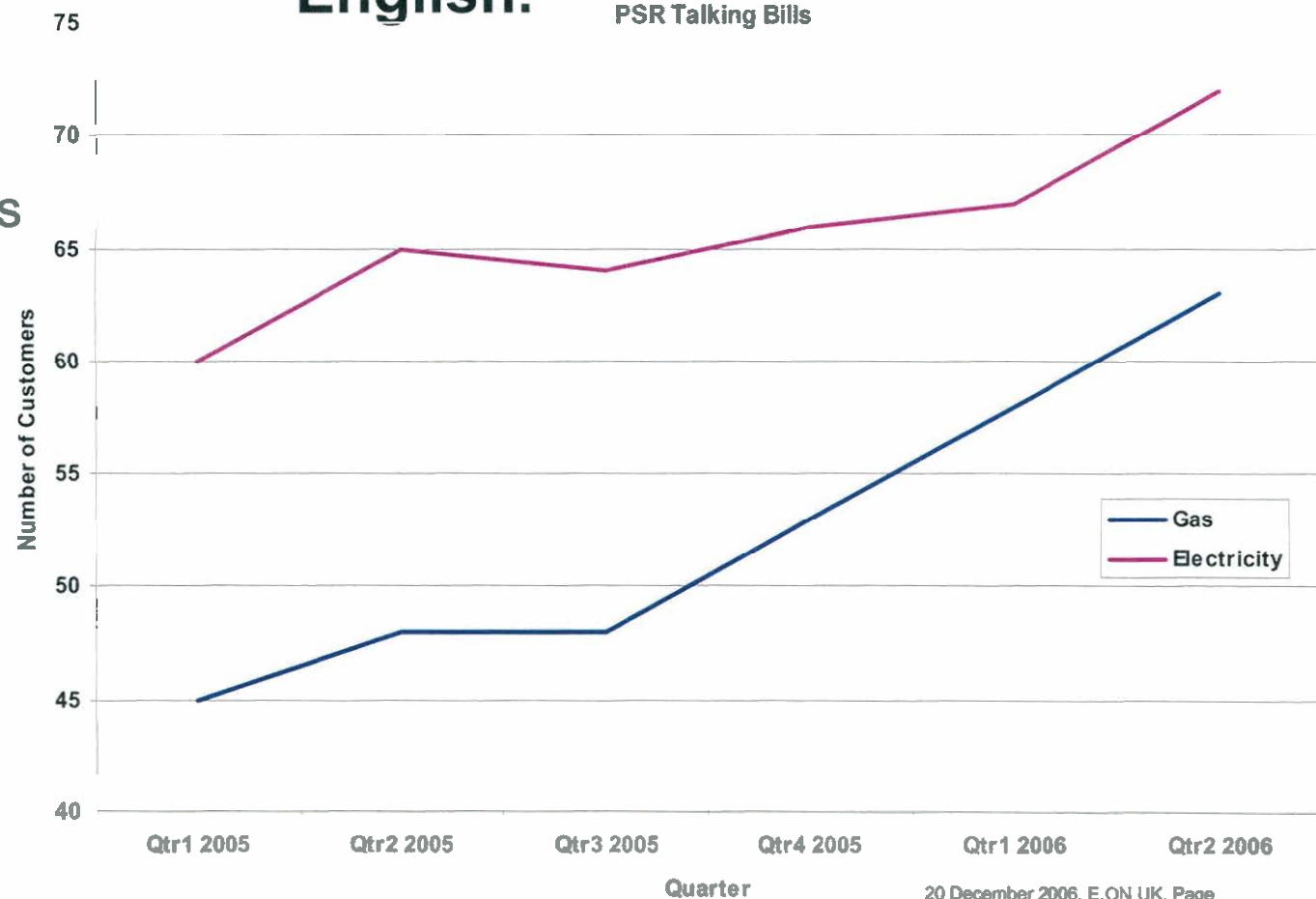
- Minicom service available
- Usage increasing but still small



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Talking Bills

- Again small numbers
- Increasing



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First Language not English

- Do not currently print bills in languages other than English
- Some publications such as codes of practice are available in other languages
- Use *language line* to assist in telephone conversations
- All staff have access to *language line* via our internal knowledge centre

Mental health problems

- Home visits by our vulnerable customer credit management team
- Or by our community energy advisors
- Ad hoc and small scale

Working with others

Recognise the need to work with others

- Trusted by customers
- Have the knowledge
- Know who the customers are

But.....

- Commercial agreements restrict
- Need to be seen as independent
- Data Protection Act seen as an obstacle (excuse?)

Summing Up

- We do take our responsibilities for vulnerable customer into account
- Many schemes across the industry aimed at helping vulnerable customers
- Corporate and Social responsibility high on all agendas
- Genuine desire to improve (it's in our interests)
- Willingness to accept help and constructive advice