

Wider Communication Strategies

Ofgem – Customer Service Reward Scheme

Service is one of SSE's core values. We constantly seek opportunities to create positive, memorable experiences for our customers, colleagues and the communities in which we work.

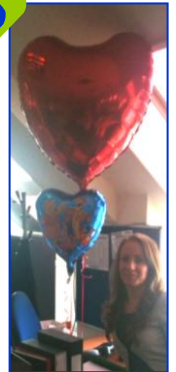
To deliver this to our 3.5 million customers in Northern Scotland and across central southern England, we recognise good communication is vital. At SSEPD, good communication is not just about us being heard; it is about actively listening to what our customers are saying, engaging with individual customers to understand where they are coming from, offering real solutions, and checking they are happy at every step.

The **HEART initiative** reinforces this approach across all our activities, empowering our staff to treat customers like family.

HEART Initiative

Here to make and keep promises
Escalate if you need help
to find the right solution
Always show you care
and check the customer is happy
Resolve the problem
Take personal responsibility

**Treat customers like family,
have their best interests at heart.**



Service Value Projects

Every day our staff are creating memorable customer experiences. Over this past – extremely harsh – winter, staff were out in the communities helping those left isolated by the severe weather. They delivered food parcels, took customers to important doctor appointments and even rescued a herd of stranded cattle.

Whilst we are currently very proud of the service we provide to our customers, we recognise that there is more we can do. Developed out of our Power2Serve and Power2Promise initiatives, the Service Value Projects are supported by the HEART initiative and aim to create exceptional service stories every single time we interact with our customers.

In the past, many of our customer-driven processes have been designed to suit our internal procedures and to meet, not exceed, our Guaranteed Standards. The objective of Service Value Projects is to redesign those processes around what the customer wants, through asking them, not telling them – to go above and beyond what is expected of a network operator and to treat our customers with care, as if they were a member of our family.

Service Value Project North

Our team in Fort William has designed a trial for customers affected by Planned Supply Interruptions. Where possible, the team will use 'live working' techniques to avoid an outage but, in the event of a necessary interruption to supply, will ensure that any work is completed with minimal disruption to the customer. The new process allows customers to choose a preferred shutdown date and has increased the amount of contact we have with customers.



Service Value Project South

In the Bracknell area, our team has designed a trial for customers in an area particularly affected by transient faults. Again, increasing customer contact is of paramount importance, together with the identification of new technology to enable us to fix the problem sooner. Work is being completed to identify possible welfare facilities for customers without supply – powered vans that can provide essential hot water and cooking facilities, and 'Warm Packs' for vulnerable customers.

"This project has a long-term goal to change the way we all approach service, both in our relationships with customers and our involvement with our communities."

Colin Hood, Chief Operating Officer

Asking customers what they want

Before starting the project trials, the teams ask customers what they want – instead of giving them what we think they need. We are also aiming to identify any additional needs our customers have and asking how they would like us to help.

Our teams are speaking to customers at their homes and by telephone to invite them to attend a focus group at a local venue.

And checking they are happy at every step...

The projects will continually evolve throughout the trial, based on the feedback provided by our customers. In order to capture this feedback, the teams will be conducting weekly surveys and asking customers to rate the new service using Net Promoter scoring. A benchmarking exercise is currently underway to allow us to compare the service, before and after.

It is essential that the trial is monitored in this way – it will allow us to identify areas for further improvement and to measure the success of the project initiatives.

Adding extra to delivering customers' requests

In addition to the project trials, we are also giving staff the opportunity to make a difference to the communities in which they are working, supported by the Communities Made Better Initiative.

When we offered our services in Fort William, the community asked us to work on the garden at the Invernevis Care Home for the 32 elderly residents. Taking this a step further, we have also negotiated with the Forestry Commission to chip and bag wood from trees recently felled at Quoich Forest, which we will deliver to vulnerable residents to heat their homes.

In the South, our team is currently in discussions to identify work that will make a difference to the people of Bracknell and will identify the right projects to become involved with as the trial progresses.

Wider Communication Strategies - Continued

Ofgem – Customer Service Reward Scheme

In addition to improving the way our staff engage with customers, the **HEART initiative** has empowered them to take action, which quite often means they have to communicate with external parties, such as councils and other businesses.

Our call taker, Darren, had a particularly harrowing call when a customer who was upset with her phone service provider threatened to harm herself. Not only did Darren contact her service provider on her behalf, he took the time to listen to her and comfort her over personal issues that had led to her great distress. As a result, the customer felt she was not alone and was very much reassured.

HEART makes a real difference to all our customers including the most distressed and most vulnerable by enriching our communication and empowering our staff to provide good solutions.



"I know I can make promises that will be kept and that my customer will receive the highest service I can provide."
Michael Gray, Engineering Telephone Bureau

Making sure we reach the most vulnerable

The quality of our customer service for **priority customers** is dependent upon the quality of our information, but keeping our Priority Services Register (PSR) up to date is no easy task, as the SSEPD network covers almost one third of the land mass of Great Britain.

While we have made sure that every member of SSEPD staff is armed with information and materials to sign up priority customers, we also try to reach customers through charities and agencies. We developed a leaflet for this purpose, and for every 10 customers located we offer a charitable donation as a thank you. We also use our relationship with oxygen providers to ensure we know of any oxygen-dependent priority customers.

We engaged with suppliers to develop two-way processes for sharing information on PSR customers. Currently, we have data flows in place ensuring we have all PSR customer details from suppliers' PSR. To develop this into a two-way process, we issued a PSR guide for suppliers to promote awareness and discussion. We promised suppliers if they tell us about their PSR services, we will ensure our PSR customers are aware of them, and issue updates of all new customers registered with us to their supplier.

Making sure we hear our customers

We carry out customer surveys of those customers affected by faults and call customers before and after we carry out new connection or supply alteration works. This helps us identify what customers feel we are doing right and where they want us to improve.

For example, in response to customer feedback, Poole depot were able to improve their customer service by over 25% and customers in Oxford saw an improvement of over 20%. In the North, Argyll and West depot significantly improved their customer service by over 50%.

All feedback is analysed and results and comments are handed on to every member of staff. The results show the surveys are working to improve staff performance – and it's our customers that are telling us.

Making sure we are always learning

We use Learning Teams in our Emergency Service Centres and depots to continually improve our customer service. By doing this, we develop our staff into individuals who can influence the customer experience and encourage each other to strive towards excellence. The Learning Teams employ peer to peer feedback on the handling of customers' calls and allows them to challenge each other in an open, honest way.

Through the use of our Learning Teams it became apparent that the customer experience is often not always positive due to restrictions on our staff as they believed they could only 'do their job', which wasn't always helpful for customers or understanding of their predicament. Through the introduction of HEART, our staff are now empowered to go further in resolving customers' issues.

We aim to give every customer affected by a supply interruption a courtesy call following restoration.



Support Through the Storm

by Emergency Service Centre Performance Manager, Traci Kidd

“ We strongly believe honesty is the best policy, so when we knew some customers wouldn't have their power restored that night we called to let them know, allowing them to make arrangements and asking if we could help in any other way.

We called all our priority customers during the power cuts to make sure they were safe and comfortable. We asked each of them if there was anything further we could do, and if they were struggling we made sure we provided them with help in every way we could. ”

"So kind of you to let us know"
Mrs Friar
"Thanks for calling and telling us"
Gordon Arms Hotel
"Thanks for keeping me informed"
Mrs Caulder

Engaging Customers with Low Carbon Solutions

We are currently working with local councils and stakeholders such as Community Energy Scotland to support and develop low carbon and energy saving initiatives, in sympathy with local requirements. We are ensuring that we meet with these parties and really listen to what they are saying to understand their needs and work together to develop appropriate solutions.

One particular community has set its own aspiration of 100% of electrical energy from renewable sources. The network serving them has several issues which will get worse with an uptake of renewable generation. Their community also suffers from high levels of fuel poverty. Together, we are looking at how we can develop innovative network solutions that will fulfil their aspiration and target their fuel poverty issues within the current regulatory framework.

Customers who desire low carbon solutions are offering us unique opportunities to trial and develop innovative solutions. We believe that our engagement with these customers benefits everyone by developing a sustainable future for all.

Wider Communication Strategies: Supplement

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How HEART worked for Mrs Reeves

Like many elderly people, Mrs Reeves (82) lives in her own home in Sherbourne but finds it difficult getting around, especially with an upstairs bathroom. With the support of carers and a stairlift, she manages to cope.

When her power went off, Mrs Reeves wasn't too worried as her stairlift has a back-up battery. But when it started beeping, she felt panicked; if it stopped working she couldn't reach her bathroom. What's more, the beeping was incredibly irritating and kept reminding her of her predicament if it failed.

With her family in Buckinghamshire, over 120 miles away, she didn't know who could help. **Needing someone to turn to, she called SSEPD.** When Sharron answered her call, she listened to her concerns and made sure she understood exactly what was upsetting her.

Mrs Reeves explained she was thinking of calling an electrician to stop the beeping but Sharron suggested they look for an alternative first as calling out the electrician would incur a call-out charge. Mrs Reeves didn't have a regular carer that Sharron could phone to get their advice.

Sharron didn't know the answer straight away so she promised to find the solution for Mrs Reeves. Using a HEART card, she recorded **her promise to Mrs Reeves** to make sure she fulfilled it.

Sharron decided to call the stair lift company to find the solution. After speaking to them, she called Mrs Reeves back with a set of clear instructions on how to stop the beeping and conserve the battery of her stair lift.

Staying on the phone with Mrs Reeves, Sharron guided her through how to unplug the stairlift and made sure she could plug it back in.

With her problem solved Mrs Reeves was relieved and very grateful that Sharron at **SSEPD went that bit further to help her.**

Taking communicating with customers to a new level



We really listen to make sure we understand the problem

We communicate with whoever is needed to solve their problems

We communicate with the customer to make sure they are happy

I have 'Hearted' my customer by making the following promise
to find out how to stop her stairlift from constantly beeping and running down the battery as wouldn't be able to go to bathroom.

Time of my 'HEART' call 12.35

Passed to Mark Mrs Reeves Smees **ETBZ**

Has the promise been kept? Y / N / NA
Was the promise delivered on time? Y / N



SSEPD
Emergency
Centre Staff

How HEART worked for the Mitchells

When the lights went out in their home, the Mitchells were confused and alarmed. With Mrs Mitchell dependent on daily nursing care, Mr Mitchell contacted their nursing staff, who notified SSEPD.

Call taker, Jamie, spoke to Mrs Mitchell, who was very confused but explained some things in the house were still on. Suspecting an internal fault, Jamie explained the situation to the Mitchells and how to fix it. Mr Mitchell, at age 95, feeling confused and very worried about his wife's illness, struggled with Jamie's instructions.

Realising the Mitchells needed someone else to help them, Jamie tried to contact their landlord. Concerned over how confused and distressed the couple were, Jamie called our engineers out and reassured them that he was sending help. When our engineer arrived at the Mitchells' home, a carer had already reset the trip switches.

The next day, Richard called the Mitchells to make sure they were okay. Mrs Mitchell put her nurse, Maxine, on the phone. Maxine explained the same thing had happened overnight. Maxine gave Richard the landlord's name. Richard found their number and arranged for them to attend that day to check the electrics, calling Maxine back to let her know. Richard **called back the next day to make sure the problem was resolved.**

How HEART worked for Mrs Gellati by Call Taker, Jane Bakella

During the North Storms in March 2010, my role was to liaise with Audrey and contact all our Priority One customers. After calling round all our P1 customers, I came across Mrs Gellati.

Mrs Gellati was an elderly woman who had been off supply overnight, had no hot food and her daughter was also snowed in, therefore she could not get to her. To make matters worse, she was one month away from her 90th birthday. After speaking to her for a while, **I built up a relationship with her** and found she was from London – she prefers it up here but not the weather! - and as well as being on her own with no power, a bird had got stuck in her chimney and attic. It was a big one and the squawking and flapping was really scaring her. She didn't want to use her little gas heater, which was positioned under her chimney in case she burned the bird. She phoned the council but due to the road conditions, they were unable to tell her when they would come. She was a bit confused and was not sure if they were going to attend.

I spoke to Steve Wood who was at Aberdeen Depot throughout the storms co-ordinating the engineers on site and issuing generators to our vulnerable customers. Steve straight away agreed that something had to be done so he organised a portable generator for her. However as we were about to despatch it her supply came back on and it was not needed. She was over moon with this offer though and really grateful for everyone's hard work.

However she was still concerned about the bird in her house and **I wanted to help her and not leave her worrying** so I phoned the Moray Council to confirm they still had her on record as calling and they did. Due to the roads being very bad they required a guy with a 4x4 to gain access to her house (which they did not have at that time) but promised it would be that same day. I relayed this back to Mrs Gellati and she was so happy all she needed was reassurance – she was more concerned about the bird than the power cut.

I called her later on that day to make sure the council had attended and that she was ok. Her supply was back on and the council had turned up and reassured her that the bird had got out.

She was a lovely old woman - I would compare her to my gran - and all she required was a bit of reassurance.

I imagined my own gran being in her situation, and like most elderly customers, their concerns are not always the fact they have no power but the smaller things.