

# Ofgem Customer Service Reward Scheme

## Stakeholder Engagement

**WPD's overall stakeholder engagement strategy is to:**

- **identify our stakeholder groups**
- **use a range of appropriate methods to engage with stakeholders from our website, leaflets, telephone, workshops, public meetings and the media**
- **make information relevant to different groups of customers, stakeholders and staff**
- **listen to our customers and stakeholders, and make changes as a result**
- **publish an annual stakeholder report.**

**We apply this strategy across a range of issues identified as important by our stakeholders including information about WPD, our business plan, low carbon generation connections and flood/severe weather response.**

**The strategy is reviewed annually and agreed by the Chief Executive**

### Identifying our stakeholders

Using our knowledge of our customers and third parties who we have contact with or work in partnership with, we have mapped our stakeholder groups and created a database of contacts across each group.

We update our contacts database from contacts who register for our events via our website, information from our staff and managers and research work done to prepare for stakeholder events.

This year we have focused on developing contacts in five key stakeholder groups:

- **Domestic customers** - our customer awareness campaign leaflet is sent to every customer. This encourages customers to register their interest in stakeholder events via our website.

- **Large customers and generators, suppliers** and other parties interested in pricing methodologies - we identified that we were not engaging with these stakeholders very effectively. We used the opportunity of the new pricing methodology for large users to develop relationships with these stakeholders over a series of six well-attended workshops.
- **Customers and developers interested in investing in renewable generation technology** emerged as a key group of stakeholders - we have worked with the Centre for Sustainable Energy to identify customers and developers interested in installing renewable generation.
- **Police and emergency services** - through our more active membership of the Local Resilience Forums we have forged links with the police emergency service and local government agencies.
- **Regional Government** - we became a Welsh Assembly Government Anchor Company.

### Representative sampling

We have used a range of different channels to engage with a sample of our key stakeholder groups:

- We commissioned research on customer awareness of WPD and contacting us.
- We commissioned a telephone satisfaction survey of around 1,000 customers who had contacted us for a range of services. This looked at how well we communicate with customers.
- We commissioned 20 in-depth interviews of customers who had contacted us with a connection enquiry, to evaluate their needs, including how they want to communicate with us and what type of information they want.
- We also worked with Regen South West on a survey of 40 installers of renewable energy. This gave us detailed feedback on our processes, so that we can look at ways of making them easier to use.
- We included an online feedback survey on our main renewable generation webpage. And we asked the Centre for Sustainable Energy to review the webpage.

- We maintain an email circulation list of every large customer, large generator and supplier. We use this to email our pricing information, consultation information and details of stakeholder events. Our stakeholder events were well attended by a cross section of interests within this stakeholder group. This gave us representative views on the development of the EHV pricing methodology.
- The Local Resilience Forums involve representatives from every Police force and Fire Authority, local authorities, the Environment Agency and other bodies involved in emergency planning across our region.
- We have two consultative groups consisting of representatives of every National Park and AONB in our two regions. These groups determine suitable schemes for the undergrounding incentive. WPD provides technical assessment support.
- Communication with our staff is part of stakeholder engagement process. We ask one third of staff each year how well we communicate with them in our staff attitude survey Powertalk which measures 12 communication KPIs.

### Improved understanding of customer and stakeholder needs

Our knowledge and understanding of customers and stakeholders has evolved throughout the engagement process as follows:

#### Customer information

- Research in 2010 told us that that awareness of WPD was very low. 60% of customers would like general information about WPD.

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- Our satisfaction survey also showed that customer awareness of who we are could be improved and highlighted the specific areas that we need to target.
- We also held stakeholder events to ask what type of information customers wanted us to provide. In particular large customers and suppliers highlighted additional pricing information that they need and when.
- During flooding in Cornwall in 2010, WPD staff attended 3 public meetings in conjunction with other emergency services. Local residents wanted WPD to give advice about flooding and their electricity supply. This helped us identify a wider need for this type of information.

### Staff information

- Nearly 30% of staff said that they didn't feel up-to-date about issues affecting the company. This helped us when we reviewed the format of our in-house publication Powerlines. In response to the survey we now provide more business related news.

### Customer communication

- We provide information to customers via our website. In particular we developed a new section for generation connections. The feedback received in respect of the website enabled us to evaluate how customers were accessing the website and make iterative improvements.
- Customer research told us that telephone contact is still very important to many customers, especially during a power cut or when making a connection enquiry.
- Customers also told us that there is a growing interest in new forms of communication such as web based applications and texting.

### Renewable connections processes

- 2010 saw a dramatic increase in enquiries from customers about micro and small scale renewable generation. Customers/installers told us that they want our processes to be easier and quicker. We are looking at how to address this feedback.

### Joint working with public authorities

- We take an active part in Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) in partnership with

stakeholders such as the Police, local authorities, the Environment Agency, and the NHS. Feedback from these bodies on how well we communicate during emergencies has helped us to improve our processes.

- The risk of flooding emerged as a new challenge over the past 5 years. During our regulatory review, stakeholders supported our request for funding to improve our substation flood protection. In support of this major investment programme communication with stakeholders and customers is vital.

In March 2011 we took the opportunity to participate in the government's UK wide Exercise Watermark led by the Cabinet Office. WPD contributed exercises covering the coastal area of Devon & Cornwall and the rural area of Dyfed Powys. Each event lasted 24 hours and involved scenarios of flood damage to substations serving around 10,000 customers. Two senior managers took part in Gold Command led by the local Police. This enabled us to test "warn and inform" procedures with the media, other utilities including telecoms providers, government agencies and hospitals.

- We work with the local Police to provide assistance in detecting and reporting incidents of metal theft from our network. Good local relationships has helped us understand and improve the information they need from us, and to be able to work together to provide information to the media.
- During our regulatory review process we listened to the views of the National Park Authorities and the AONBs who want us to invest in limited undergrounding schemes at iconic sites. We agreed to take this forward during 2010-15. We are working with their representatives to understand and respond to their priorities.

### Benchmarking

#### Customer Service Excellence Standard

We were awarded the Government's Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Award in 2010. This standard sets out best practice for both public sector and private

sector companies across a number of key areas:

- customer insight and stakeholder engagement
- customer-focused culture
- provision of accessible information
- service delivery including complaints handling
- timeliness & quality of service & performance standards.

The 5 areas assessed under 57 separate criteria and over 100 individual elements.

The application process and annual assessment helps us make ongoing improvements. In particular the CSE Assessor highlights areas where we are achieving best practice – and suggestions for improvements in other areas with examples from other organisations who also hold the CSE Standard.

### Capturing and managing feedback

WPD has a very flat management structure. Each manager is asked to send details of interaction with stakeholders to the Regulatory & Government Affairs Manager.

Some stakeholder relationships are co-ordinated by key senior managers. For example membership of the Local Resilience Forums and actions taken in response is the responsibility of WPD's Control Centre Manager.

Feedback from stakeholder research is recorded centrally, and reviewed by senior management and then the Chief Executive. Decisions are then disseminated back to operational managers so that actions can be taken in response to the feedback.

A summary of feedback is included in WPD's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and reviewed regularly.

We also report on the feedback and actions taken in response in our annual Stakeholder Report. This is available on our website in the stakeholder section.