

SSEPD Submission Document

Part 2: Acting on stakeholder feedback

2

2014/15

Ofgem Stakeholder
Engagement
Incentive Scheme
2014/15

Placing stakeholders
at the centre of our
business

The year it began to feel different

The past year has seen us invest significantly in our engagement activities, addressing weaknesses in our approach while building on our strengths. In this submission, we set out examples of initiatives we have greatly improved upon, or introduced, in 2014/15. I am delighted to say that a number of our stakeholders have stated how our response “feels very different”. This tells me change is being embedded and improvements are rapidly becoming our “business as usual.”

A step-change towards open engagement

Our geographic remit is unique among the UK’s Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) as we cover two separate, distinct regions – central southern England including urban West London and the north of Scotland including remote islands. This diversity makes it vital to listen to a wide range of stakeholders to meet their needs while keeping the lights on at the lowest cost to customers.

Activities in 2014/15 are helping us to engage more openly across areas and stakeholders groups at **national and community levels**. We have built relationships with MPs and MSPs and gained recognition of our resilience planning. Our Customer and Community Advisers (CCAs) are meanwhile forging sustainable community relationships.

We pay particular attention to how we serve **vulnerable consumers**. Our new Expert Panel on Consumer Vulnerability helps us to focus on how and where we can give better support and peace of mind. We also scrapped our call centre scripts to enable our staff to better get to the heart of customers’ underlying concerns and to give them the freedom to have truly meaningful conversations.

Linked to our strategy to engage with a broad range of **connections customers** while also addressing their specific, individual needs, we introduced measures to devote more one-to-one time with them.

Utilising our core business capabilities, we are working with external partners on **innovation projects** to improve technologies and working practices in order to deliver real benefits to customers and to keep the lights on.

Especially around storms and power cuts, stakeholders want more and different ways to communicate with us.

We’ve therefore stepped up our engagement through various **media**. Our PowerTrack app, for instance, has evolved to give timely, locally tailored information – this app is the first of its kind among the UK’s DNOs.

Ensuring we act on stakeholder feedback

Underpinning all our initiatives is a solid engagement strategy and approach. Our stakeholder engagement feedback loop shows how we consider direct and indirect feedback from within and outside our business, act on it, check outcomes, and seek input on further improvements.



Gaining external perspectives on our performance

Our stakeholders judge us on outcomes, and as a business we must invest resources wisely. This year, we engaged professional services firm, PwC, to help us articulate and quantify the outputs and outcomes of some of our strategic, organisational and operational engagement initiatives.

Another way we check our progress is through our **Customer Voice Groups** – fully independent scrutiny panels that I chair. They comprise representatives from our key stakeholders: major demand customers, contractors, consumer advocates, connections customers, renewable energy customers, universities, charities and others. Minutes and actions are disseminated to all members, with actions and progress being monitored.

We know we are on a journey to seek more ways to listen to, and act on, stakeholders’ views. The examples we show in this submission demonstrate the improvements we’ve made over the past year in our stakeholders’ interests.



Stuart Hogarth

Stuart Hogarth
Director of Distribution
and member of the
SSEPD Board

Submission structure

Part 1 shows how we gather and analyse the views of a wide range of stakeholders across a variety of topics. It explains the basis of actions we take to change our business plan, approach and/or communications to fit our strategy.

Part 2 reports on examples of initiatives we put in place in response to stakeholder feedback or to proactively address their needs. We explain whose views informed the initiative, what actions we took, how we checked the responses, and any next steps to further improve our approach.

Part 2

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A step-change in engaging throughout our communities

“We are committed to being a responsible member of the communities in which we live, work and serve and to engaging with stakeholders in those areas at a **strategic**, **organisational** and **operational** level.”

– Lisa Doogan, Director of Network Services

We've made great progress to ensure that our communities are best served in times of emergencies. This year, we've further developed our resilience planning and can truly demonstrate benefits to stakeholders. From MPs and MSPs to local council bodies and directly with customers, we

enjoy more direct and valuable relationships with a range of stakeholders. Below, we set out examples of how we've engaged with our communities at **strategic**, **organisational** and **operational** levels and how we've developed our engagement over the past year.

Our strategic engagement: Building long-term relationships with MPs and MSPs

Helping MPs and MSPs to better understand our network and how we work enables us both to be more effective. We also recognise their importance as a channel for exchanging reliable and timely information with constituents. This benefits us by us gaining access to insights into what is important to our customers.



Scotland's Deputy First Minister John Swinney visiting our Network Management Centre



Our organisational engagement: Forging sustainable community partnerships

Close local working relationships are key in addition to our national-level work. We focus on sustainable, long-term relationships to better prepare us and our partners for times of need. We engage with councils, the police force, fire and rescue, the ambulance service, mountain rescue, military liaison, environmental protection agencies and charities such as the British Red Cross. We have gained a strong reputation with these stakeholder groups. During extreme weather events, our customers benefit from this collaborative approach.

“

A number of senior officers in the Highlands had never experienced... the good working relationships we've built up over the years. I just wanted to convey a collective thanks and praise to you.”

Emergency, Events and Resilience Planning, Police Scotland

A step-change in engaging throughout our communities continued

We've seen a step change this year in our engagement with parish/community councils and local authorities ('local councils').



This feels like the culmination of a brilliant 12 months of working with SSE[PD]."

Emergency Planning and Resilience
Hampshire County Council

Our operational engagement: Our Customer and Community Adviser (CCA) role

Following the 2013/14 storms consultation we responded with the publication "Reconnecting with our Customers". This contained a **commitment to be more visible** in our communities. As a result, in 2014/15, we developed the role of the Customer and Community Adviser (CCA), whose specific purpose is to tailor the way we communicate with customers, local resilience partners and local government.



By the time we woke up there were already two [CCAs] walking round explaining what had happened... Fantastic job all round and a prime example of how it should be done!"

Wiltshire resident
following January 2015 storms

Understanding and addressing consumer vulnerability

“A power cut can be a particularly difficult time for vulnerable consumers. When reaching out, we’ll be satisfied only when no one feels overlooked or alone.”

– Gregor Alexander, SSE Executive Committee and Chair of the SSEPD Board

We recognise that vulnerable consumers require particular attention from trained staff who understand their needs and concerns. We work with external bodies such as the University of Dundee and trusted intermediaries to improve our understanding of, and responses to, vulnerability. This past year, we also set up an Expert Panel on Consumer Vulnerability to help check that our approach, policies and procedures truly serve the needs of our vulnerable consumers.

Maintaining accurate records is a challenge we are addressing – particularly of customers who transition in

and out of a vulnerable state due to say medical conditions or financial stress. To enhance the quality and quantity of data on our Priority Services Register (PSR), we partner with charities and care providers as well as hold open days to raise awareness. This helps us know and better serve these customers.

We are also keen to reassure our partners, customers and regulator that we are committed to responding to all customers equally. We have, therefore, begun the accreditation process for BS 18477.

“I was extremely impressed with what I saw today and, in particular, the steps that are taken to look out for their most vulnerable customers.”

Pete Wishart MP

Setting up an Expert Panel on Consumer Vulnerability

We need critical friends who can share insights when we identify and address vulnerability among the fuel poor, older people and those who are ill or otherwise in need. In late 2014 we set up the Expert Panel on Consumer Vulnerability. Members include Age UK, Macmillan Cancer Support, British Red Cross, Energy Action Scotland and National Energy Action. They have helped us begin forming:

- Training to help our staff understand, identify and sensitively respond to vulnerability
- A catalogue of information and organisations we can refer vulnerable consumers to when we lack in-house expertise
- Research to help map where fuel poverty and climate change is impacting customers and how we might respond
- A communication plan to tell more of our customers about our PSR service



Collaborating with local care providers and charitable organisations

Strong relationships with charities and other partners help us to better understand our customers’ needs. They also provide a channel through which we can engage with, and disseminate information to, vulnerable consumers.



“SSEPD’s support is vital to ensure we are able to expand our emergency response work, helping more people at times of crisis.”

Simon Lewis,
Head of Emergency
Response, British
Red Cross

Understanding and addressing consumer vulnerability continued

Improving our offering based on stakeholder feedback

We have heard from our customers that they genuinely benefit from our Priority Service:

- 99% of customers in our annual survey 2015 were supportive or very supportive of us having a Priority Service Register for vulnerable consumers
- 83% of PSR customers surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the service
- Customers told us after the March 2015 storms that they felt we genuinely cared and that our service has 'greatly improved'

We know that there is more we can do. Our vision is that, by 2023, our fair, accessible and responsive service will champion the needs and welfare of every customer whilst providing a safe, reliable supply of electricity. To help us achieve this, we set out our objectives for the next eight years in our business plan.

To help us meet these objectives, we have this year concentrated our efforts in the following areas:

Raising awareness of our PSR

- 64% of customers in our annual survey 2014 were not aware that customers who are vulnerable can get extra help and support from us
- 70% of customers we engaged with at the Black Isle Show in August 2014 were unaware of our PSR

To address this, this year we have:

- Used open days and public events to raise awareness of consumer vulnerability
- Delivered copies of our 'Extra support for you during a power cut' booklet to GP surgeries and designed a simple leaflet that introduces our Priority Service, to be distributed at events or in communities
- Deployed more CCAs

Enhancing our existing offering and finding new ways to identify vulnerable consumers

As well as collaborating with local care providers and charities, this year we have:

- Recruited three additional staff to improve the accuracy of our PSR customer data and increase the number of customers registered with us. We presently have around 393,000 accurate registrations on our PSR
- 'Scrapped the script' to allow staff to address the underlying concern behind customers' questions and identify vulnerability. For instance, when customers ask "When is the power coming back on?" what they mean is "Will I be able to heat my baby's bottle?" or "Can I keep my medical equipment running or do I need to ration it?"
- Formed a catalogue of advice and organisations we can refer customers to if we lack in-house expertise

Using technological innovation to help customers on our PSR

- In early 2015, we began working with iViTi Lighting Ltd to trial its new lightbulb, which, using a small battery, remains lit for three hours after the loss of mains electricity
"Customers on SSEPD's Priority Service Register who have the ON bulbs will discover that the need for torches, matches or candles will be minimised, reducing the possibility of falls and fires." Trefor Jones, Director at iViTi Lighting Limited

Ensuring a consistent service across our organisation and the wider population

This year we have:

- Started delivering classroom-based vulnerability training to around 150 contact centre and 2,000 depot-based staff
- Recruited a manager to help deliver our consumer vulnerability strategy
- Worked with SPEN (Scottish Power Energy Networks), the NHS and organisations on our Expert Panel on Consumer Vulnerability to increase awareness of our PSR service
- Participated in a joint DNO working group to develop a common web-based platform, which can also be accessed by our partners, to ensure consistency for all vulnerable consumers across the UK

Making progress to meet the requirements of BS 18477:2010 Inclusive Service Provision

This standard demonstrates that a company meets the requirements for identifying and responding to consumer vulnerability. By attaining it, we hope to provide our stakeholders with confidence that our services are accessible to all consumers equally – regardless of their personal circumstances. This year, an auditor from the British Standards Institution (BSI) completed a desktop review of our processes against the BS 18477 requirements. The review concluded that the right processes are in place and recommended we should progress to a full audit. For our Board, this voluntary standard gives an independent assessment of where we are on our journey towards our vision, and is a measure of our success in engaging around consumer vulnerability.

99%

of customers are supportive or very supportive of us having a Priority Service Register for vulnerable consumers

83%

of PSR customers are satisfied or very satisfied with the service



Customers on SSEPD's Priority Service Register who have the ON bulbs will discover that the need for torches, matches or candles will be minimised, reducing the possibility of falls and fires."

Trefor Jones,
Director at iViTi
Lighting Limited

2000+

staff receiving training on understanding vulnerability



Re-designing the SSEPD website... [has] improved its accessibility for as many as 572,000 customers."

PwC's outputs and outcomes report on customers with sight loss, dyslexia and/or learning disabilities

Acting on feedback from a wide range of connections customers

“Continuous improvement in serving our connections customers is vital. We’re investing in an ever-more robust engagement approach that captures their views and needs.”

– Colin Nicol, Managing Director of Distribution and member of the SSEPD Board

Demand connections customers range from individuals moving their meter or needing a one-off connection to supply electricity to their home, to developers and businesses that require multiple or complex connections.

Generation connections customers require a connection to the grid to supply electricity to others, for example through solar panels or large-scale wind farms.

Our engagement with connections customers is reported under the Incentive for Connections Engagement (ICE) and is an integral part of our stakeholder engagement strategy. Here, we include an example of how we have used customer feedback to drive engagement initiatives for our generation connections customers. We also include detail on how we used stakeholder feedback to improve our connections surgeries.

Using customer feedback to drive engagement initiatives

In 2013/14, we delivered a detailed and comprehensive programme of engagement with our generation connections customers. This helped us highlight four key areas for improvement: customer service, information provision, the application and connection process, and ease of choice in connection provider.

We identified 12 initiatives for 2014/15 to address these areas, undertaking a focused survey of more than 125 customers and other stakeholders to validate our selection. This feedback was used to further tailor our plans, which are detailed in October 2014’s [A Plain Guide: Our Plans and Commitments for Generation Connection Customers for 2014/15](#).

We engage with the generation connections community through various channels. We speak to them on an individual basis through our dedicated account managers; on a group basis through focused consortia meetings and workshops; and at large scale events and conferences such as Ecobuild, the All Energy Conference and NFU meetings.

Increasing one-to-one time with customers through Connections Surgeries

After hearing at events that connections customers wanted more one-to-one time with us, we trialled our Connections Surgeries in 2013/14. This was received positively by our customers, so we developed this offering further in 2014/15.

“

Overall, we have been very pleased with the approach that SSEPD has taken to engaging with the DG [Distributed Generation] community. We can see that you have listened to many of our concerns raised in meetings and individually. Thank you very much for your ongoing engagement.”

A national renewables trade body



17

connections
surgeries held
in 2014/15

Engaging to drive innovative solutions

“In providing energy for all customers, we need to be sure that our innovation projects deliver the right value in the right places with real benefit for customers now and in the future.”

— Alan Broadbent, Director of Engineering

Our engagement helps us understand the challenges facing Great Britain's distribution network and find ways to ensure security of supply and value for money for customers. Through ongoing innovation projects, we take a strategic, long-term view to anticipate and meet changing customer behaviours. Projects include Thames

Valley Vision, Northern Isles New Energy Solutions (NINES), Solent Achieving Value through Efficiency (SAVE) and My Electric Avenue.

Here are some further examples of how we innovate in response to direct stakeholder feedback.

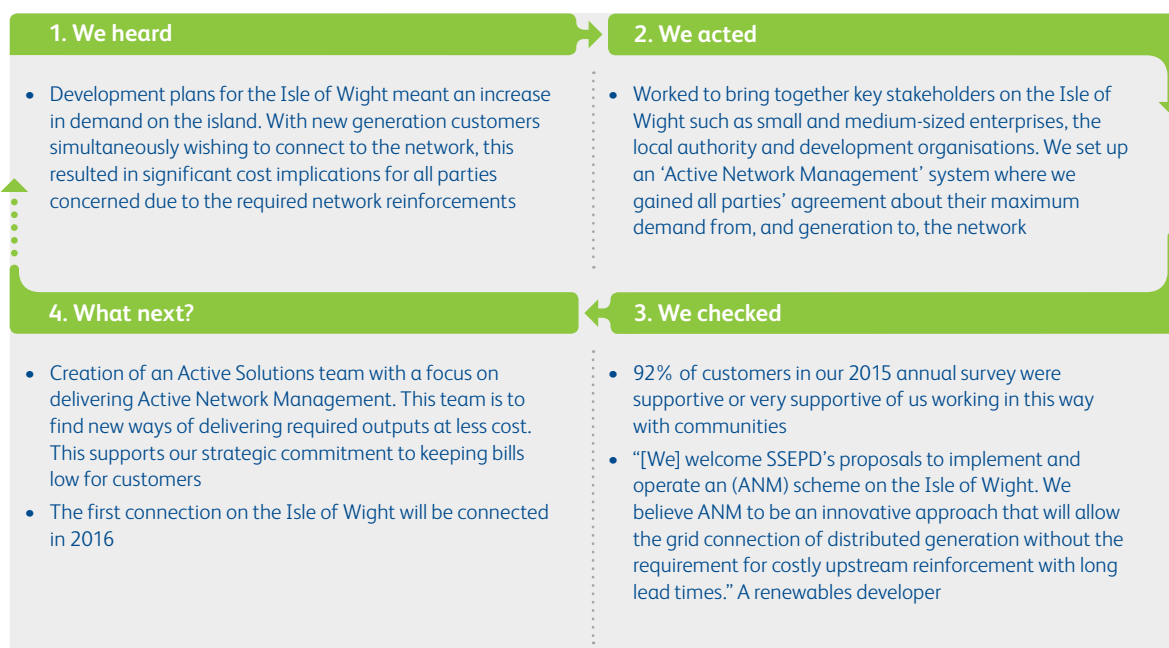
Ongoing strategic projects:



Introducing innovative working practices with our customers

It is common practice that we look at the desired outcome for our stakeholders, working backwards to find sustainable solutions to their needs. One example was at Grudie Bridge where we encouraged 29 small individual renewable energy customers in the north west highlands to work together to form a consortium and share the connection cost. This enabled all participants to connect to the network in a more cost effective way.

Another example of an innovative working practice is through the use of **Active Network Management (ANM)** which connects components of a smart grid such as smaller energy generators or storage devices through software to monitor and control their operation. ANM also takes real-time measurements to control demand and generation, while minimising network losses, stabilising the system and detecting faults. We ensure these technologies are integrated into the energy system for efficient use, reducing the need for costly network reinforcement. An example of this in practice is on the **Isle of Wight**:



We pioneered ANM through innovation projects to develop Britain's first smart grid on Orkney. On the Isle of Wight the ANM identified a solution cost of £700,000 compared to a £42 million reinforcement cost.

Trialling innovative engineering capabilities and technologies

In our 2014 annual survey, 95% of those surveyed were supportive of the following commitment: 'We will reduce the number of power cuts by 5% and their duration by a quarter'. To achieve this, we have been trialling a number of technologies including the Bidoyng. This is a smart fuse designed to restore supplies within 120 seconds of a fault occurring. By March 2015 we had invested £12.5 million installing 2,100 Bidoyngs on our network. This had a significant impact for our customers. In February 2015, we experienced our best month in history in central southern England for Customer Interruptions and Customer Minutes Lost – two of our primary measures. In our annual survey 2015, 97% of our customer were supportive or very supportive of our use of this technology.



In February 2015, we experienced our best month in history for Customer Interruptions (3.29) and Customer Minutes Lost (3.39). We're on course to out-perform our Ofgem and Board stretch targets."

Alan Broadbent,
SSEPD Director
of Engineering on
performance in central
southern England

Being more accessible through various media

“Have we got our interaction with customers right? That’s a question that keeps me awake at night. We made a commitment in our 2015-2023 business plan that customers could contact us in more ways that suit them. We’ve made huge progress on that front.”

— Stuart Hogarth, Director of Distribution and member of the SSEPD Board

In addition to improvements to our communication with communities and customers, we have invested in our media and online presence. We committed in our business plan for 2015-2023: “You’ll be able to contact us in more and more ways that suit you.” To deliver this, we’ve reinforced our resources over the past year, hiring a new Head of Communications and expanding our digital and website teams.

Our awareness campaigns focus on generating awareness of who we are and what we do. Our social media presence and website functionalities respond to stakeholders’ requests for more precise, locally-tailored information. We aim to better inform and educate our stakeholders, and give them more opportunities to engage with us.

Here are some examples of how we are now using media to better engage with our stakeholders.



Our Head of Operations in the south, Bev Keogh at a live BBC radio phone-in

Preparing for winter through an engaging and informative awareness campaign

Our winter awareness campaign was designed to inform and engage all 3.6 million of our domestic and business customers. It provided timely and relevant information to customers about SSEPD and the services we provide ahead of the winter period, which is when customers are most likely to need our help.

1. We heard

- A survey of 2,737 SSEPD customers was undertaken by Social Market Research in 2013/14. It found only 49% of respondents were aware of who we are and what we do
- 26% of respondents said they receive information about us and the electricity distribution network through leaflets, and 24% through local newspapers. Both of these sources were noted as the most preferred going forward (41% and 29% respectively)

2. We acted

- Through our longstanding KPI process, the SSEPD Board allocated additional budget for an awareness campaign launched in late 2014. This included:
 - A general information leaflet “What we do for you” sent to 3.6 million addresses, at a cost of £203,400
 - A “Preparing for winter” leaflet for customers
 - Advertisements that hit almost every local newspaper in our licence areas and many commercial radio stations
 - A PR campaign that runs alongside paid-for advertising
 - Web advertising across our distribution areas
- Adverts contained three calls to action: visit our website; download our PowerTrack app; note our telephone number
- Videos to show what we do and raise PSR awareness
- Our senior managers are available at any time to radio and TV stations to respond directly to stakeholders’ concerns. This is especially useful around times of storms or power cuts

+18

percentage points increase between 2014 and 2015 of customers who knew how to reach us in a power cut

4. What next?

- Three further customer-facing leaflets will be distributed in 2015/16, including:
 - Priority Services
 - General power cut information
 - Energy efficiency
- Successful campaigns will be repeated, using the best bits and trying out new aspects
- Corporate re-brand is planned to make our brand simpler and easier for customers to understand who we are and how we fit into their lives

3. We checked

- PR campaign reached 1.6 million people
- Advertising campaign reached 1.4 million people
- 170% increase in visits to ssepd.co.uk homepage in the week our adverts were published
- 32% increase in downloads of our PowerTrack app
- More than £2 million advertising equivalent value from positive coverage (calculated by external consultants)
- 67% of customers in our 2015 annual survey were aware of who we are and what we do (up from 49%)
- Reached over 1.2 million Facebook users in 2014/15 (prior year: 171,000) while the users ‘liking’ us rose six-fold
- Our number of Twitter followers rose 3,248 (or 31%) in 2014/15 and we received almost 8,500 mentions

Being more accessible through various media continued

Delivering more timely and relevant information during power cuts and storms

Our multi-platform, multimedia approach coordinates messages to suit local press and broadcast media timings, with information that is clear and focused on local areas. **StormLive** replaces part of our website to show detailed local information about restoration times; videos of our senior management team explaining what we are doing; and details of where and when facilities such as catering units will be available.

PwC's outputs and outcomes report observed that in January 2015, StormLive received more than 20,000 hits, being more than a 1,000% increase on the typical number of clicks on our news homepage. The number of Twitter users following us rose by 30% and we saw a 155% increase in Facebook likes over that same period.

We were the first DNO to launch an app (**PowerTrack**) to keep customers updated on progress in a power cut. We have evolved it in response to stakeholder feedback, including upgrading it in 2015 to include:

- Post code search facility – search for any faults reported in the area by postcode
- Update notifications provided when our engineers provide updates
- Severe weather alert – brief overview of what is happening weather-wise



Our PowerTrack app

Winter awareness campaign 2014/15 – summary of outputs and outcomes



Embedding real change in our business

Examples of how our initiatives fulfil the key factors of assessment

We have detailed example initiatives throughout this submission, demonstrating how our engagement with stakeholders has led to change in our business. Although all of the initiatives we have featured meet one or more of the assessment criteria, we reiterate some of these examples below.

| Key Factors of Assessment | Initiative example | Page |
|--|---|-------|
| Initiatives which best serve specific interests of challenging groups of customers/communities/future stakeholders and result in measurable benefits | <p>Providing information and reassurance to customers in a power cut can be particularly challenging, and we have learned much about what our customers need and want from us during this difficult time. When consulted, 65% of customers told us that they were unhappy with the clarity and consistency of our information during the storms of 2013/14 and highlighted the need for more local information. As a direct result of their feedback, we committed to deploying more 'Customer and Community Advisers (CCAs)' to knock on doors, identify vulnerable customers, advise communities about progress we're making in their area and co-ordinate our resources and partners on the ground. The benefits of this action are clear – in a recent survey of 1,446 customers, 64% of customers who had experienced a power cut were happy with the quality of information received.</p> <p>"By the time we woke up there were already two [CCAs] walking round explaining what had happened... Fantastic job all round and a prime example of how it should be done!" Wiltshire resident following January 2015 storms</p> | 03 |
| Initiatives which reflect innovative thinking in responding to needs of stakeholders | <p>A business as usual approach was inadequate regarding development plans on the Isle of Wight that would significantly impact the island's electricity network. Engagement with stakeholders involved in the plans allowed us to fully understand their needs. We combined this with our experience of Active Network Management (ANM) to identify a solution to control demand and generation on the island, thereby reducing the need to invest in expensive energy network reinforcement that would otherwise be required to facilitate the development plans. The benefits of this innovative solution are clear – reduced costs and a stable electricity network to support economic growth on the island.</p> <p>On the Isle of Wight the ANM identified a solution cost of £700,000 compared to a £42 million reinforcement cost.</p> | 07 |
| Initiatives which are part of an holistic approach embedded in our business | <p>Our vision is that, by 2023, our fair, accessible and responsive service will champion the needs and welfare of every customer whilst providing a safe, reliable supply of electricity. We aim to achieve this by enhancing our existing offering to vulnerable consumers, raising awareness of the services we provide, and ensuring a consistent service across our organisation and the wider population. We have undertaken a diverse set of activities this past year to bring together expertise from within and outside our business so that we are continually improving. Our new Expert Panel on Consumer Vulnerability, our work to achieve the BSI standard and scrapping the call centre script to free up staff's engagement with customers are all embedding real change in our business and are helping us to identify new ways of working.</p> <p>"I was extremely impressed with what I saw... in particular, the steps that are taken to look out for their most vulnerable customers." Pete Wishart, MP</p> | 04-05 |
| Initiatives which are supported by robust project management processes and appropriate resources | <p>Through our longstanding KPI process, the SSEPD Board approved the budget for a wide-ranging winter awareness campaign that was launched in November 2014. Our newly reinforced communications team developed a communication plan that used stakeholders' feedback on their preferred means of contact with us. The result included customer information leaflets, advertising campaigns and making senior resource available to the media such as for live BBC radio phone-ins.</p> <p>The result was an 18 percentage point increase in awareness of SSEPD at the time of year when that information would be most relevant to our stakeholders.</p> | 08 |
| Initiatives which may be recognised as smart/best practice and could be replicated across the industry | <p>Our well-established relationships with councils, the police force, fire and rescue, the ambulance service, mountain rescue, military liaison, environmental protection agencies and charities such as the British Red Cross, enable us to better prepare ourselves and our partners for times of need. Our work in building resilience plans has been recognised externally as best practice. For example, in recognition of our leading role in resilience planning, we have been invited by Scottish Government to speak to the Resilience Advisory Board for Scotland (Voluntary Sector) in late 2015.</p> <p>"I have chaired several meetings of the Scottish Government Resilience arrangements and have consistently found the situation updates provided by your staff to be well informed, forward looking and showing great concern for public safety, resilience and community wellbeing." John Swinney, Scotland's Deputy First Minister</p> | 02-03 |