

# Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive 2015/16

Part 1



## PART 1

## Foundations of our stakeholder engagement

We are now a year into delivering our 2015-2023 business plan for the North West.

The plan, developed from feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, is designed to deliver a cost-effective and responsive service to households and businesses, while also supporting our vulnerable customers and preparing our network for an increase in demand and a low-carbon innovative future.

### Empowering our partners

Effective partnerships with our stakeholders will help us to deliver this plan, by informing our approach, holding us to account and supporting delivery.

While we have developed working relationships with many local, regional and national organisations over the past five years, independent evaluation has highlighted that our strategic approach needs to be more robust. We value this feedback, and over the past 12 months, have taken a number of actions to address it.

Our focus for 2015/16 was to review our processes to ensure we were being responsive to what our stakeholders were telling us. After reviewing our approach, we have built upon what we have learned over the past four years and what our stakeholders have told us. Therefore we have aligned our stakeholder strategy with our business plan and RIIO themes. This has sharpened our focus, allowing us to engage more strategically, and measure the impact of this engagement.

### Collaboration in action

New stakeholder advisory panels, each focused on a priority business area, now influence our approach – ensuring we achieve our RIIO targets in a way that reflects local and regional priorities.

We have expanded the core team responsible for stakeholder liaison, and involved a greater number of our executive team members and senior leaders in the process, along with board level commitment. The outcomes from our vulnerable customer strategy can be found in Part 3 of our submission.

One step was to start to train our front line staff, to ensure stakeholder engagement becomes a company-wide responsibility. This programme began in 2015 and will continue until all customer facing employees have undergone training.

Through these foundations, we want to continue working with our stakeholders to deliver imaginative and innovative projects which meet our business goals and deliver significant regional benefits.

This submission demonstrates the actions we have taken during 2015/16 to improve our stakeholder engagement process, and the benefits this is delivering for our customers and the region.

**Steve Johnson**  
Chief Executive Officer



“Working collaboratively to develop solutions and projects to improve services for customers is the right thing to do. The Electricity North West engagement approach is testament to their commitment of moving towards a more collaborative delivery approach.”

**Clare Redfern**  
Relationship Manager Localities Working, Stockport Council

## PART 1

## In this year's submission

## PART 1

An overview of our approach to stakeholder engagement. We discuss how our stakeholder work aligns with our business strategy, and the changes we have made over the past 12 months to strengthen our approach.

## PART 2

Our stakeholder engagement programme in action. This section describes flagship projects which have either been delivered in partnership with stakeholders, or projects which they have influenced.

In a year in which Storm Desmond brought the heaviest rainfall on record to the region, we also explore how effective stakeholder engagement helped to support and keep customers informed during a turbulent end to 2015.

## PART 3

This section covers our vulnerable customer strategy and all key aspects of our programme to identify, engage and support vulnerable customers.

We examine the way we gather and store Priority Services Register (PSR) data; partnership building; training our colleagues and tailoring our support to meet specific customer needs.



## PART 1

# Strengthening and enhancing our engagement programme

Our stakeholder engagement programme is driven by senior management, informed by a broad range of stakeholders and owned and delivered by colleagues across the business.

## The building blocks of this programme are:

### Stakeholder engagement plan

We have a stakeholder engagement plan that is closely aligned with our 2015-2023 business plan. This is supported by a stakeholder manual. Aimed at everyone in Electricity North West, the manual describes how stakeholder engagement benefits our business; gives clear guidance to all colleagues on our approach to stakeholder engagement; provides mechanisms for internal overview and scrutiny, and explains the board-level commitment to stakeholder engagement.

### Vulnerable customer strategy

Our approach to vulnerable customers is to provide enhanced support to all our vulnerable customers. We base our approach on identifying areas of vulnerability and we will use this data to form effective partnerships to deliver positive outputs.

### Internationally-recognised standards

Our approach to stakeholder engagement is based on the AA1000 Accountability Principles Standard – an internationally-recognised, stakeholder specific standard.

### Stakeholder advisory panels

We have established four new advisory panels, composed of a mix of stakeholders. Each panel focuses on one of four themes which are at the heart of our business plan: reliability, sustainability, affordability and vulnerability. Each panel has met once to date, and we aim to meet twice a year to review action plans, with all four panels also coming together once a year for a full day planning session.

### Senior leadership and review

An internal stakeholder panel, composed of members of our Executive Leadership Team, assesses the progress of our stakeholder engagement work and provides company-wide leadership. The panel will meet three times per year with the first meeting scheduled for May 2016.

### Colleague training

We provide training for front-line colleagues, with an emphasis on engaging vulnerable customers. A stakeholder manual, containing practical guidance on how to engage effectively with stakeholders, in accordance with AA1000 principles, supports these efforts. We consult with our advisory panels on the content and approach.

### Independent review

We have again engaged PwC to assure that our stakeholder engagement activities are fairly stated in this report. Our approach to vulnerable customer engagement was also reviewed separately by Frontier Economics in December 2015 as part of an Ofgem trial process to further develop DNO's accountability for their vulnerable customers.





## PART 1

## Overview of our stakeholder engagement process

**STRATEGY**

2015-2023  
business plan

Stakeholder  
engagement plan

**STAKEHOLDER GUIDANCE  
AND INFLUENCE**

Four new advisory panels

Each panel focused on a priority  
business area

Three year, jointly-developed action plan  
for each priority area

Will meet twice a year

Annual planning day for all panel members  
to discuss the regulatory year ahead

**ANNUAL STRATEGIC  
ADVISORY PANEL**

Collaborative event for attendees that aims to  
empower our stakeholders to help us deliver  
positive and effective outputs

Focused on setting the agenda for the medium  
and long term objectives of the company

Annual event for all members of each advisory  
panel to attend, including other invited guests and  
speakers. First annual panel will take place on  
10th June 2016

**SENIOR  
LEADERSHIP**

Internal stakeholder steering group, composed  
of Executive Leadership Team members

Internal working group composed of senior leaders  
to help implement outputs from the advisory panels

Increased members within the core stakeholder  
team based on previous feedback

Two annual board updates and reviews per year

**INDEPENDENT  
REVIEWS**

Annual review and assurance of  
stakeholder engagement activity

Feedback from advisory panels helps  
shape our approach

## PART 1

## Changes in 2015/16: A closer look

We have taken a number of actions over the past 12 months to establish a strategic base for our stakeholder engagement programme.

We have linked our stakeholder work to our business plan. This has enabled us to focus on the issues we need to engage on, and the organisations and individuals we are seeking to reach.

Measurement and KPIs of our stakeholder activity is now closely linked to our over-arching business targets and RIIO outputs, providing a more robust basis for evaluation.

We've also involved the wider business in stakeholder activity, through training and awareness raising, as we believe that our programme must be owned by the whole company if it is to be truly effective in the future.

### Changes from the past 12 months include:

#### 1. Narrowing the focus with our advisory panels

Our stakeholders want a regular platform through which we can collaborate, share feedback and review progress. For the past three years, a single, external stakeholder panel has performed this function.

However, our stakeholders told us that one panel was simply not enough to capture the level of detail we require.

In response, we have established four new advisory panels, composed of stakeholders who are subject experts. Each panel focuses on one of four themes which are at the heart of our business plan. These are:



##### Reliability

Keeping the lights on and responding quickly to network faults.



##### Affordability

Providing an affordable, value for money service for all, while helping to address fuel poverty and providing support for vulnerable customers.



##### Sustainability

Ensuring our network can adapt to future challenges such as a low carbon economy and climate change, while keeping bills affordable.



##### Vulnerable customers

Providing excellent customer service to all our customers, especially those who are vulnerable or need extra assistance.

Each panel is led by an Electricity North West director and senior manager, and meet three times a year. These meetings are an opportunity to share progress and to gather feedback, opinions and ideas. Each panel has already met once, and will be meeting again in June and September. This new approach has been endorsed by participants at our new style panels, who have welcomed this more focused approach.

Membership of each group is varied, allowing us to draw upon specialist knowledge and ensure a range of opinions are heard.

In partnership with each panel, we are developing three-year action plans, which form the basis of our discussion and agenda at each session.

Once a year, all four of our advisory panels come together for a strategic planning day, in which we share our business programme for the coming year, and invite feedback. This session includes plenary sessions and workshops, and gives stakeholders an opportunity to get a broader understanding of our business and strategic objectives.

#### 2. An expanded core team

We have appointed a new Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement, Michelle Lewis, who has joined us from Yorkshire Water. At Yorkshire Water, Michelle devised and delivered the comprehensive customer and stakeholder programme which informed the company's Price Review Plan. The approach delivered by the company was widely recognized as industry-leading in that sector. Michelle will be building on this experience to develop the Electricity North West approach to stakeholder engagement.

Working closely with Michelle is Jonathan Collins, our full-time Stakeholder Manager.

#### 3. Senior leadership

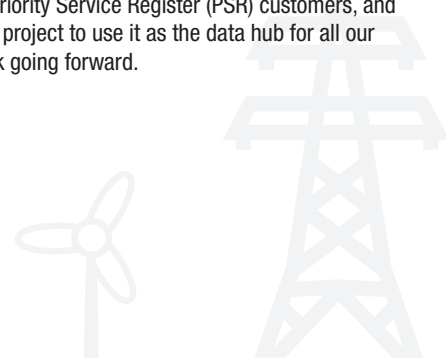
A newly created Internal Stakeholder Review Panel, composed of members of our Executive Leadership Team, will ensure high-level visibility for the stakeholder programme and will provide a report on our stakeholder activities to our Board each year.

#### 4. Training for the front line

Working with external partners, we have started to train our customer-facing colleagues over the past 12 months with the aim of improving their skills, confidence and motivation to identify and engage with potentially vulnerable customers. More details can be found in Part 3 of our submission.

#### 5. Improved technology

We launched a bespoke Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system in 2015, which is already delivering advantages in the way we store information, and interact with our customers and stakeholders. The system has improved our work with Priority Service Register (PSR) customers, and we are currently developing a project to use it as the data hub for all our stakeholder engagement work going forward.





## 6. Online

We have been working closely with our website agency and are currently implementing changes to our website's resilience as the result of a specific review covering the following:

- A new 'emergency page' solution to ensure more direct and resilient communications to end user of the website during an incident
- Improvements to the power outage map solution to enable it to handle higher volumes of outages and end user traffic
- Improved 24/7 Service Level Agreement (SLA) with website agency
- Improvements through load testing to ensure proven readiness for possible scenarios
- Allow the website to handle more of the basic information provision in emergency situations so that colleagues can focus on more bespoke and 'person to person' customer service provision during these periods
- For Twitter we are using keyword targeting around weather and power cuts alongside geo-targeting to reach people who are affected by a fault or likely to have issues with a fault. We use this channel to promote our official accounts to encourage followers and improve the reach of our updates and information.

We consider how to engage on a case-by-case basis, reflecting feedback received to date, as well as looking for new ways to reach customers and stakeholders that we don't have the same depth of relationship with. Examples include:

Industry  
Workshops

School  
Visits

Advertising

Bilateral  
Meetings

Web

Social  
Media

## 7. Promoting ourselves and the industry more effectively

In order to engage with stakeholders and vulnerable customers, we continue to improve understanding of our organisation and the industry.

To this end, we have rolled out a multi-channel marketing campaign for the past two years, and refreshed all our public facing literature. Base level awareness of Electricity North West has risen from 38% to 48% as a result. More details are available in Part 3 of this submission.

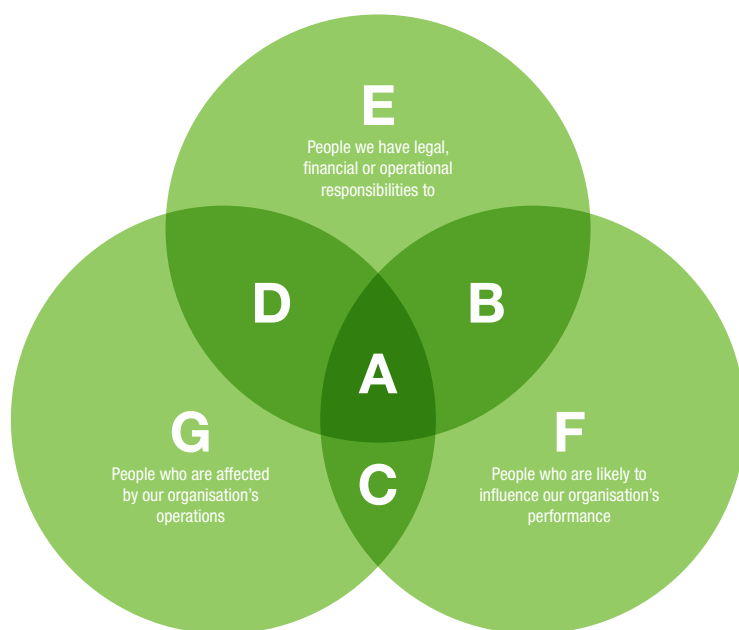


## PART 1

# Identifying stakeholders

In creating our new stakeholder advisory panels (see below) we wanted to find subject-experts for each of our four business areas.

A materiality matrix helped us to prioritise stakeholders. Those organisations and individuals who are most affected by our activities, and can, in turn help us, to achieve our business objectives, are given the greatest priority.



Level 1 stakeholders	A		
Level 2 stakeholders	B	C	D
Level 3 stakeholders	E	F	G

### Members of our four advisory panels and organisations we have initiated contact with is as follows:

- Action on Hearing Loss
- AGMA
- Alzheimer's Society
- Bolton Council
- British Red Cross
- Calico Homes
- Carbon Co-op
- CBI
- Cumbria action for sustainability
- Cumbria Constabulary
- Durkins & Son
- East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce
- Emergency Planning & Resilience Lancashire County Council
- Energy Saving Trust
- Environment Agency
- Goldmine Business Development
- GMCA
- Irwell Valley Sustainable Communities Project
- Krista Patrick Consulting Limited
- Luneside Consulting Ltd
- National Energy Action
- National Farmers Union North West
- National Grid
- New Economy Manchester
- Procure Plus
- Quantam Strategy & Technology Ltd
- REG Windpower Limited
- Salford City Council
- Salford FRE
- Siemens
- Stockport Council
- Stockport Hydro Ltd
- The IET Energy policy panel
- Transport for Greater Manchester
- 10:10 campaign

## PART 1

## Working in partnership to deliver our business plan

In preparing our 2015-2023 business plan, we engaged with stakeholders from across the North West to ensure our plans are aligned with what our customers wanted.

Now we are into the delivery phase, we need our stakeholders to help inform the way we deliver the plan, to maximise benefits for the region.

Our recent advisory panel sessions have provided useful feedback, which we are now using to help guide our approach to delivery in the current regulatory year.

“...the advisory panel approach is a move away from traditional consultation towards more meaningful collaboration. This means joint working towards shared outcomes within defined spatial areas. It’s positive to see Electricity North West working towards this new way of working, especially at a time when there is significant change within Greater Manchester both in terms of governance, devolution and growth.”

David Hodcroft  
GMCA / AGMA Planning and Housing Team

### Key themes to emerge from our panel sessions include:

- Smart meter roll out and the effects on customers
- Affordability of electricity for customers
- Classification of vulnerability, how do we arrive at different classifications?
- Vulnerability in different circumstances (e.g. dairy farmers)
- Future energy supplies (e.g. PV, micro-generation)
- Reliability of an aging network vs. new technology and greater demand
- Skills and supply chain for future workforce

See Section 2 for details of how we are working with our stakeholders to deliver against these themes.

## Independent evaluation

Each year, our stakeholder activity undergoes independent review and assurance from third party organisations including Frontier Economics and PwC.

These annual reviews, combined with feedback from Ofgem on our last submission, have helped us to identify areas for improvement.

Below we have highlighted feedback from the past 12 months, and how we have made improvements in response.

### Feedback

Lack of dedicated resource was contributing to an ad-hoc approach.

“ENWL has demonstrated that it undertakes some useful activities in relation to its vulnerable customers. However, it appears to have taken a more ad hoc approach to tackling customer vulnerability than some of the other DNOs, and is in an early stage of developing its strategy.”

Frontier Audit December 2015

### Our response

We employed a full time Stakeholder Manager answering in to a Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement; formalized a stakeholder engagement review process at senior level; and rolled-out training to a wide range of colleagues across the business.

#### You said

Our stakeholder engagement approach didn't have strong KPIs in order to effectively measure our outcomes and outputs.

#### We did

We aligned our stakeholder strategy KPIs to our over-arching business targets to ensure clarity and garner business-wide engagement for our approach.

#### You said

Our approach was ad-hoc and not joined up.

#### We did

We refreshed our approach and introduced four advisory panels to provide a more in-depth and collaborative approach to our engagement going forward.

## PART 1

## Demonstrating a strategic approach to Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability

Examples		Outputs
<b>We have comprehensive and up-to-date stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability strategies.</b>	Our 2015/16 focus was to reevaluate our approach to stakeholder engagement, developing what we did well and enhancing what we needed to improve on.	An updated stakeholder engagement strategy and approach for 2015/16 and beyond.
<b>We engage with a broad and inclusive range of relevant stakeholders including challenging or hard-to-reach stakeholders</b>	Our previous panel structure needed to be expanded in order for us to engage with more stakeholders in a targeted way.	Our advisory panel structure has been improved so we can engage with more stakeholders in a targeted way. Our four advisory panels which meet twice a year, along with our Strategic Advisory Panel, allows for more meaningful and in-depth engagement with our stakeholders.
<b>We use a variety of bespoke mechanisms to inform and engage our stakeholders.</b>	We engage with our stakeholders in person at specially organized events and at other events that we attend. We also engage with customers online through the likes of Twitter and Facebook.	Presenting at North West Business insider event, interacting with customers on Twitter and Facebook and sponsoring and attending the Manchester Science festival, ensures we are engaging with stakeholders in different ways appropriate to them.
<b>Engagement has led to positive outcomes for stakeholders.</b>	Working with stakeholders, they told us that our engagement methods needed to be more targeted.	Our new style advisory panels, the contents of our vulnerable customer welfare packs and our CRM system, are all examples of us responding to stakeholder feedback to help achieve positive outcomes.

## Engagement in action

A sample of the stakeholder engagement we've undertaken across the business over the past 12 months:

Overarching business goal	The organisations/ individuals engaged	The type of engagement approach	Outcomes
<b>Customer</b>	North West business insider event	Speeches, conference and public presentations	Engaging with businesses to discuss future requirements
<b>Customer</b>	Business In The Community (BITC)	Public- Private partnerships through grant-making	Members of BITC to reach hard to engage with stakeholder groups such as charities, housing associations and local community groups
<b>Vulnerable customers</b>	Customers who are on our Priority Services Register	Surveys and focus groups	Work with vulnerable customers through surveys and focus groups to ensure our offering and outputs are meeting their requirements.
<b>People</b>	Unison GMB Prospect Unite	Collective bargaining with workers through their trade unions	Regular meetings held with trade unions to engage and collaborate on business processes
<b>Affordability</b>	Energy Saving Trust East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce	Multi-stakeholder forums via advisory panels	Engaging businesses to adopt energy saving behaviour
<b>Sustainability</b>	Kelvatec Siemens The University of Manchester	Joint projects through partnerships	Our Smart Street project (funded through LCNF) aims to make networks and customers' appliances perform more efficiently and make it easier to adopt low carbon technologies onto the electricity network such as solar panels, electric vehicles and heat pumps.
	Strategic Advisory Panel (10th June 2016)	Integration of stakeholders into governance, strategy and operations of the organisation	Outputs will be captured after June 10th session



## PART 1

# Accreditations

**In order to give our stakeholders confidence that our approach is robust we do the following:**

## AA1000APS

We have continued to follow the AA1000APS principles of inclusivity, materiality and responsiveness.

## Independent assurance

Formal independent assurance on our description of our stakeholder engagement activity:

## 2015/16 assurance provided by PwC

Formal independent assurance over our description of our stakeholder engagement activity:

- 2015/16 assurance provided by PwC
- 2014/15 assurance provided by PwC
- 2013/14 assurance provided by Deloitte
- 2012/13 assurance provided by Deloitte

## Corporate Responsibility (CR) Index

Reported against CR Index for fourth year maintaining our highest ever score, including 100% for stakeholder engagement element:

- 2015 score: 79%
- 2014 score: 79%
- 2013 score: 73%
- 2012 score: 54%

## Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G4

We are working towards GRI's new G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines and appointed an external party in April 2015 to help us.

**We have worked towards the following:**

## Institute of Customer Service 'ServiceMark'

In December 2014 we were accredited by the Institute of Customer Service with the award of their customer service mark.



## ISO14001

Environmental Management Systems standard

## National Association of Pension Funds

Pension Quality Mark Plus

## OHSAS 18001

Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series for health and safety management systems

## Asset Management Certification (PAS 55 and ISO 55001)

We were first certified against the BSI PAS 55 specification for the "optimized management of physical assets" in 2007 and retained that certification for nine years.

Following the publication of the international standard for asset management, ISO 55001, in 2014 we were successfully audited against the new standard in October 2015.

# Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive 2015/16

Part 2



## PART 2

## Building upon our solid foundations

We are proud of what we have achieved and the relationships we have built with our stakeholders over recent years. But we want to do better.

Feedback from our independent auditors and from our regulator, Ofgem, while acknowledging our achievements, has also highlighted the need for a more robust strategic approach.

We welcome this feedback and have worked hard over the past 12 months to build on previous years' work, by establishing even stronger foundations for our stakeholder programme.

### Measuring success

We have aligned our stakeholder strategy more closely with our business plan and our RIIO outputs. This has sharpened our focus. We know precisely what we need to engage our stakeholders about, and how we will measure the success of this engagement.

Four new External Advisory Panels, made up of subject experts from a broad range of sectors, ensure we deliver our business plan in a way that maximises benefits for the region.

We have expanded our core stakeholder team, and involved our senior leaders more closely, providing greater visibility.

We still have work to do but feel confident we are heading in the right direction – delivering benefits for our customers and the region that bely our size as the smallest Distribution Network Operator in the UK.

### Refining our approach

It's worth stressing that these important developments have in no way slowed down the pace of delivery. We are now a year into our 2015-2023 business plan, and as this year's submission demonstrates, have continued to work closely with our stakeholders to roll-out a number of industry leading initiatives.

2015/16 also saw our business placed in the eye of the storm, when the North West was battered by some of the worst weather on record. I'm tremendously proud of the way we collaborated with our partner organisations, and rose to the challenge.

**Steve Johnson**  
Chief Executive Officer



"Energy costs are one of the biggest overheads facing small businesses and yet many of them feel isolated when dealing with the energy industry. As a Chamber we welcome the approach taken by Electricity North West to engage, listen and act on the issues and concerns that these businesses face in their daily operations."

**Hugh Evans**  
Deputy Chief Executive / Policy Director  
North & Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce



## PART 2

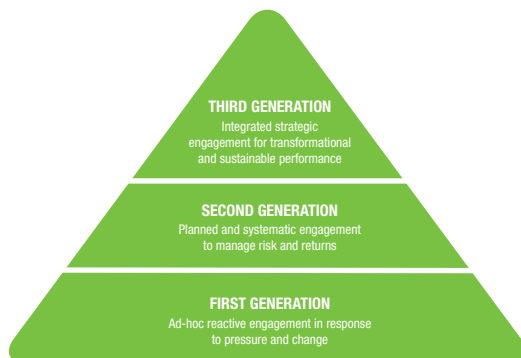
# Focused and well-informed: An overview of our approach

Our business plan will deliver a host of benefits to the North West between now and 2023 – and we need our stakeholders to be at the heart of the process.

By aligning our stakeholder plan closely with our business plan, we can be more strategic in when we engage, about what, and with whom.

Our approach has evolved over the past four years and we have moved from a 'first generation' approach to stakeholder engagement to a 'second generation' approach, as outlined below.

The processes and structures we are building now will let us move into a 'third generation' approach in the near future.



Here's an overview of our approach to stakeholder engagement (more details are in Section 1):

## The big four

Stakeholder engagement is focused on four core themes, which form the bedrock of our 2015-2023 business plan:



### Reliability

Keeping the lights on and responding quickly to network faults.



### Affordability

Providing an affordable, value for money service for all, while helping to address fuel poverty and providing support for vulnerable customers.



### Sustainability

Ensuring our network can adapt to future challenges such as a low carbon economy and climate change.



### Vulnerable customer

Providing exceptional customer service to all our customers, especially those who are vulnerable or need some extra assistance.

## 1. Expert panels

Four new External Advisory Panels, one for each of our core business areas, ensure we deliver our business plan in a way that maximises benefits for the region.

## 2. Senior buy-in

A newly created Internal Stakeholder Review Panel, composed of six members of our Executive Leadership Team, ensures high-level visibility and accountability for stakeholder-related activities.

A working group consisting of 11 senior business leaders also meets to plan and implement the outputs from the advisory panels.

## 3. Better tech and processes

A bespoke Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system has improved our record keeping and data analysis.

## 4. Health check

An annual independent audit highlights areas for improvement, while ongoing feedback from each of the advisory panels ensures our approach reflects local and regional priorities.

## 5. Measuring success

Outcomes and outputs from the advisory panels are captured and reviewed and implemented. Our board receives two updates a year which they review and approve. Overarching business goals are used as key metrics to ensure business-wide engagement and so our stakeholders can see the value they bring and the input and impact that they have on our organisation.

### Members of our advisory panels and organisations we have initiated contact with:

- Action on Hearing Loss
- AGMA
- Alzheimer's Society
- Bolton Council
- British Red Cross
- Calico Homes
- Carbon Co-op
- CBI
- Cumbria action for sustainability
- Cumbria Constabulary
- Durkins & Son
- East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce
- Emergency Planning & Resilience Lancashire County Council
- Energy Saving Trust
- Environment Agency
- Goldmine Business Development
- GMCA
- Irwell Valley Sustainable Communities Project
- Krista Patrick Consulting Limited
- Luneside Consulting Ltd
- National Energy Action
- National Farmers Union North West
- National Grid
- New Economy Manchester
- Procure Plus
- Quantam Strategy & Technology Ltd
- REG Windpower Limited
- Salford City Council
- Salford FRE
- Siemens
- Stockport Council
- Stockport Hydro Ltd
- The IET Energy policy panel
- Transport for Greater Manchester
- 10:10 campaign

## PART 2

## Engagement in action: A snapshot

### 22,000 free hot meals

provided to customers during Dec/Jan storms

### 4,500 proactive calls

made to vulnerable and other customers during Dec/Jan storms

### 30 key stakeholder organisations

recruited to expert advisory panels, to help guide our approach

### 80 km of overhead lines

put underground, in collaboration with local groups  
(provided as part of our Allowed Expenditure on Visual Amenity)

### 15,273 Twitter followers

up from 4,738 last April (an increase of 222%)

### 7,762 Facebook likes

up from 906 last April (a 757% increase)

### Bi-monthly stakeholder engagement events throughout 2015/16

## Creating a smart, sustainable network



**In our business plan we wrote:**

“Our sustainable network will be one which helps deliver the UK’s ambitious greenhouse gas emission reductions by enabling low carbon technology adoption, reducing the losses inherent in electricity distribution and contributing to a substantial reduction in our business carbon footprint. We believe that smart meters and other smart technology can contribute as well and our plan demonstrates our readiness to play our role in the smart future.”

This commitment was discussed at our Sustainability Advisory Panel in 2015/16, at which key stakeholders endorsed our approach.

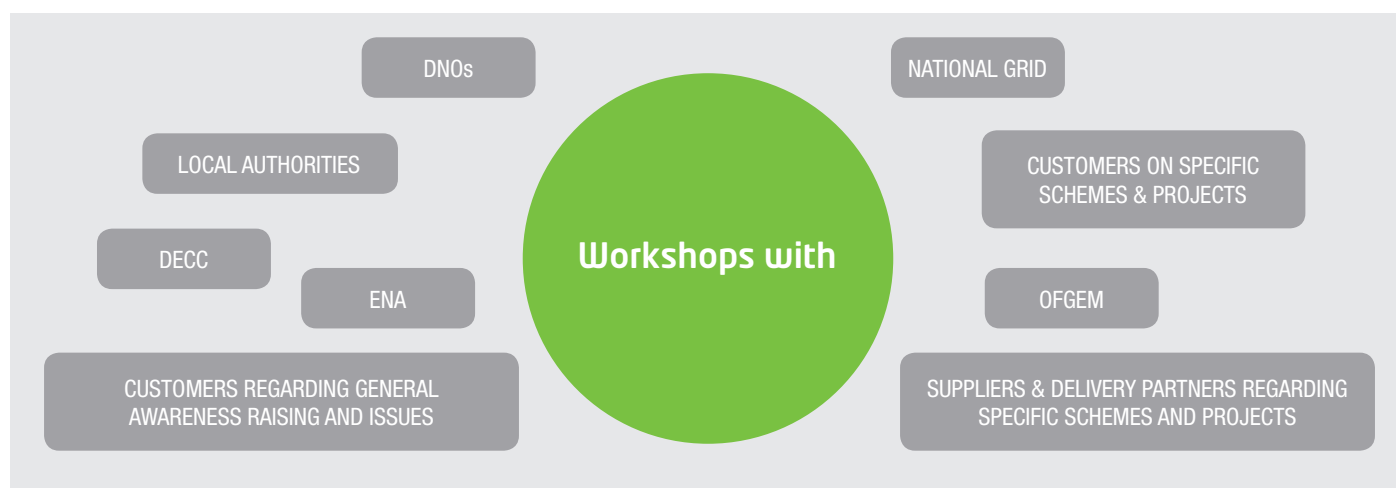
The panel members were particularly interested in the challenge of meeting future energy demand in an affordable and green way; implementation of smart meters and the move to smart grids and smart cities.

These themes have been central to our approach over the past 12 months, and we are also incorporating them into a three year work plan, which is being developed in partnership with the panel.

### Developing a smart, flexible network

Our customers are generating more of their own electricity than ever before – through solar and wind turbines – and stakeholders have told us they expect our network to be adaptable as this trend continues, and new technology emerges.

In response, we are investing in a new Network Management System which will deliver over £50million of investment benefits by using more than 13,000 switching devices and 35,000 measurement points to monitor and automate our network.



## PART 2

## Reducing demand

The move to a low carbon economy will mean an increasing reliance on electricity in the decades to come. This poses a major dilemma for distributors: how to upgrade infrastructure to satisfy demand, while keeping bills affordable?

To help mitigate escalating future costs, we are exploring options to reduce demand-side response.

Following consultation with domestic and business customers, we will be commencing a trial which will see select customers agree to remain without power during a fault for an additional, pre-agreed period of time. This will allow us to avoid the cost of network reinforcement. Participating customers will receive a financial incentive.

In 2016, we will be trialling the approach with business customers in areas where faults are most common, and exploring options to roll out the approach to domestic customers.

"Electricity North West have made themselves readily available to discuss issues specific to particular schemes, and this has been backed up by quarterly meetings where all stakeholders and Electricity North West staff convene to discuss the wider programme. These meetings are run efficiently, and provide an invaluable opportunity to discuss issues of common interest, and to update stakeholders on developments.

"Electricity North West discussed specific schemes openly and honestly, emphasising at all stages that the final say in how the money was spent rested with the stakeholder, but ensuring our decisions were fully informed by the technical constraints of each particular scheme. This assistance has enabled us to suggest a number of viable schemes, all of which are now being progressed."

Thomas Harland, Planning Policy Officer  
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

## Going underground: Replacing overhead lines in partnership with local communities

We will invest £9 million over the next seven years to replace overhead power lines with underground cables in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The programme must be based on the wishes and priorities of local stakeholders, and delivered in a sensitive way that responds to local needs.

In 2015 we held quarterly steering group meetings with regional stakeholders and maintain day-to-day liaison with local community stakeholders, to ensure projects run smoothly.

As well as planning and delivering the work, we provide ancillary support, given many local partners have severe budget constraints. This includes provision of detailed maps; liaison with expert third parties (e.g. archaeologists/Environment Agency); community consultation and public relations.

Over the past 12 months, we have entered into an agreement with the Lake District National Park to fund a park-wide survey of overhead lines – ensuring the delivery of a holistic approach.

### We meet quarterly with the following steering group members:

- Arnsdale and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership
- Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership
- Lake District National Park Authority (NPA)
- Friends of the Lake District
- North Pennines AONB Partnership
- Peak District NPA
- Friends of the Peak District
- Solway Coast AONB Partnership
- Yorkshire Dales NPA

We are also exploring ways to collaborate more closely with Northern Powergrid on projects which cross shared geographical areas.



## PART 2

## A reliable network



### In our business plan we wrote:

"Our network is already 99.99% reliable but we want to go further. Our stakeholders would like 100% reliability. This would mean us doubling the size of our network to make sure we had a back up when a cable, transformer, switch, pole or tower developed a fault. This would be unaffordable. Instead, we propose to improve network reliability by 20% from its 2012 level by 2019."

This commitment was discussed at our Reliability Advisory Panel in 2015/16.

Panel members were particularly interested the interdependence between our network development and reliability plans and local economic development needs - particularly in the Northern Powerhouse city of Manchester.

They also wanted us to consider the impact of network faults on rural businesses where there is a key energy dependency.

These are themes which we have continued to address over the past 12 months. They will also be built into a three-year work plan which we are developing in partnership with the panel.

"...the advisory panel approach is a move away from traditional consultation towards more meaningful collaboration. This means joint working towards shared outcomes within defined spatial areas. It's positive to see Electricity North West working towards this new way of working, especially at a time when there is significant change within Greater Manchester both in terms of governance, devolution and growth."

David Hodcroft (Assistant Planning Strategy Manager)  
GMCA / AGMA Planning and Housing Team

### Working collaboratively to tackle metal thefts

We have reduced metal thefts by 71% since 2011/12.

We have achieved this by improving substation security, working closely with local police, trialling pioneering marking technologies and campaigning for changes in the law so that scrap metal can no longer be sold for cash.

## 71% reduction in metal thefts

Down from 649 (2011/12) to 184 (2015/16)

### Reducing bird collisions

"Through this innovative partnership with Electricity North West we have secured both the safety of swans and geese as well as ensuring the local community are not affected by power cuts."

Nick Brooks  
Martin Mere centre manager

The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) told us that swans and migrating birds were colliding more frequently with power lines. We knew this was a problem due to our own engineers having to fix more faults caused by these collisions.

We attached 650 bird diverters to overhead lines in the area surrounding the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) site in Burscough – preventing collisions involving migrating swans and geese.

We have seen a 50% reduction in power cuts in the area as a result.

We have also sponsored a student from Lancaster University to analyse the efficiency of bird diverters. The results from the unique study, the first of its kind in the UK, will be used throughout the North West and shared with other power operators across the country.

### Supporting firefighters' new training centre

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service was looking for support to help train firefighters in substation fire safety – so they can respond more effectively in the event of a fire in such technically demanding circumstances.

In response, we have agreed to provide Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service with a 'dummy' substation, for the service's new Bury-based training centre.

The substation, which will feature equipment we no longer need, will allow the fire service to stage mock training exercises.

The training centre will deliver a wide range of other training scenarios, such as tram crashes, house fires and even ship fires and provide a location to deliver safety messages to schools and youth groups.

"We are delighted that Electricity North West is able to support us by building a replica substation at our Fire Fighter Training Site and Community Hub in Bury.

"This investment will help us train our firefighters in the most realistic conditions and the substation will prepare them to deal with potential electricity incidents they may face in the future.

"We're thrilled that Electricity North West is involved and committed to this great community project which will not only benefit firefighters but also local people and families."

Alan Topping, Station Manager  
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

## PART 2

## An affordable service, now and in the future



### In our business plan we wrote:

"We have developed a financing package which lets us meet our obligations, maintain a good credit rating and raise the money we need to pay for our investments. We believe we have struck an excellent balance between the allowances we need to meet our funding costs, the additional capital that our shareholders will invest and the incentive revenue we can earn from excellent performance, which is fair for our customers and us."

This commitment was discussed at our Affordability Advisory Panel in 2015/16 and stakeholders continue to support our strategy.

The Affordability Advisory Panel was particularly interested in working with small and medium sized businesses to develop a shared understanding of the energy efficiency opportunities and to work with fuel poor communities to develop shared approaches to this issues.

These are themes we will build into the three-year work plan we are developing in partnership with the panel.

### Our advisory panel members asked:

1. How are we tackling energy efficiency with business, consumers and how are we engaging with local and national government around smart cities?
2. What are we doing to tackle the skills shortage in Lancashire, specifically around STEM subjects?

### 1. Power Saver Challenge

Our stakeholders recognise that energy efficiency among households is key to reducing bills, while helping the UK meet environmental commitments and making the cost of future network upgrades more affordable.

We partnered with Stockport Council for The Power Saver Challenge – in which a local community took on a 12 month challenge to reduce their electricity consumption by 10% by making small changes around the home.

Stockport Council, National Energy Action and social landlord Stockport Homes worked with us on the trial.

60% of participants hit the target, and more encouragingly, maintained those energy savings throughout the following year (2015/16).



The success of the pilot indicates that behavioural change is a viable approach to help reduce the costs of future infrastructure upgrades.

The Power Saver Challenge was highly commended at Business in the Community's Responsible Business Awards.

Following its success, we are now looking to run a second project in 2016/17 and collaborating with local authorities to roll this out.

### 2. Manchester Science Festival

The Manchester Science Festival is an annual event to inspire the next generation of science students attended by over 5,000 people.

We were one of the sponsors of the 2015 event, and showcased an interactive art piece, created with Salford University, to demonstrate the links people and energy, and widen the debate around energy usage.

### 2. Bright Sparks

Our Bright Sparks programme comprises one-day, classroom-based workshops to teach primary school students about electricity and safety, and encourage interest in STEM-based subjects from an early age.

The fun, interactive workshops are aligned to the national curriculum and give children the opportunity to build their own electrical circuit, learn how electricity gets to the home and understand how to stay safe around electricity.

More than 3,000 students were engaged with over 2015/16, across our entire North West region.

## PART 2

## Working in partnership for our customers



### In our business plan we wrote:

"...provide excellent customer service for all our different customer groups. We will make sure customers can contact us quickly and easily through the most convenient channel for them. We will provide them with accurate and timely information and take ownership of their issues."

This commitment to customer service was discussed at our Vulnerable Customer Advisory Panel in 2015/16, at which stakeholders expressed support for our approach.

We will deliver additional assistance to our vulnerable customers in each year of RIIO-ED1. We will support this direct assistance with a co-ordinated programme which brings together companies, agencies, charities and other groups in the North West to develop integrated plans to help address fuel poverty.

### At our advisory panel:

#### We asked

We would adopt the (British Standard) BS 18477 Inclusive service provision. Do you think this is the right standard to adopt?

#### They said

The panel discussion focused around the need to implement these kind of standards only if it helps progress the work undertaken by the company. It should not become an end to itself. It was felt that the adoption of this standard would not produce better work as it would prove too prescriptive and therefore limiting.

#### We asked

How do we engage with customers to ensure the right people are on the Priority Services Register (PSR) and how do we refresh the data we currently have?

#### They said

Discussion focussed around what do we classify as success? We can add more people to this register but we need to establish what success will be.

Panel members would also like to see different case studies around the areas of vulnerability we capture.

The panel expressed concern around data sharing and the different approaches by DNOs and Suppliers. Recommendation for a more joined up approach to data acquisition and PSR.

### Smarter street works

Our customers tell us that a big source of irritation is around streetworks and the seemingly un-coordinated approach companies take to digging up streets and roads.

We are investing more than £1.9billion over the next eight years to upgrade our network, as well as working with other organisations to support major infrastructure projects which require new or diverted power lines.

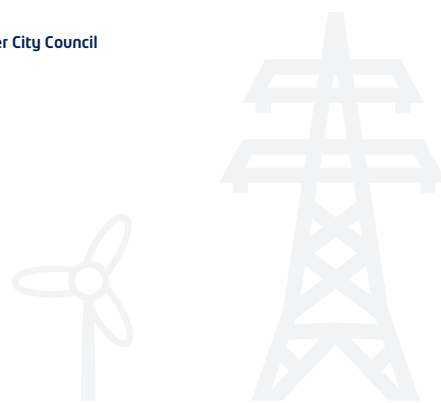
In partnership with local, regional and national stakeholders, we are taking an industry-leading approach to reduce streetworks disruption and help shape sector-wide improvements.

### Recent examples include:

- Hosting Anthony Ferguson, new Senior Streetworks Policy Advisor for the Department for Transport, for a two day fact-finding visit to the North West.
- Working with other utility companies and highways representatives to influence the code of practice governing reinstatement and backfilling, within the New Road and Streetworks Act.
- Pioneering a 'joint trenching' solution during the recent Metrolink expansion in Manchester City Centre. We carried out the excavation of all trenches, to allow other utility companies to install their assets in each joint trench. The approach has proved so successful that Manchester City Council, the lead partner on the project, is now adopting it for another major city centre project at Oxford Road bus station, and is encouraging other city centre developments to employ the same strategy.
- Streamlining the communication process during complex, multi-agency projects. We now provide a single point of contact for the client for all electrical activities – from connection of substations to use of street furniture. We have used the approach successfully on high profile projects such as the Network Rail Electrification project, and the M6 to Heysham bypass project.

"The Metrolink expansion requires a number of different agencies to work on site simultaneously. Electricity North West has helped to lead a collaborative approach to this work, saving time and reducing customer impact. As the utility diversion works are now nearly complete on the 2CC Metrolink I would like to take this opportunity to thank Electricity North West for their commitment and expertise over the last two years."

Veronica Wong  
Streetworks Co-ordinator Manchester City Council



## PART 2

## Collaborating across industries

We are not the only company working hard to improve stakeholder engagement. Water and energy sector regulators, together with the licensed service providers across these vital supply chains are wrestling with how best to involve their customers and other stakeholders in long-run strategic decision-making around the big water and energy issues in a meaningful way.

There is sometimes little public dialogue, let alone consensus, on how best to reconcile short and long-term tensions between affordability and investment for security and sustainability versus providing these essential services.

To address this challenge, one of our stakeholders, think-tank Sustainability First, came to us with a proposal for the creation of a New Energy and Water Public Interest Network, christened “New-Pin”. New-Pin aims to create a stronger and more coordinated voice for the long-term public interest in the energy and water sectors. The aim is to enable consumer, citizen and environmental advocates to engage in a more substantive way with service providers, the sector regulators and investors. This will ensure that long-run public interest considerations are addressed and sit at the heart of company, regulator and investor decision-making and governance.

We agreed to provide both strategic engagement and funding to this initiative and were the first energy company to sign up. The network was successfully launched in 2015 and has conducted the first two of seven highly informative workshops which will continue to be held at four-month intervals into 2018. The first workshop focused on ‘Long-term affordability: who should pay for our infrastructure resilience, renewal & the move to low-carbon?’. The second workshop was entitled ‘What does trust and confidence mean for the different stakeholders in the energy and water sectors? What can be done to build and maintain this?’. After each workshop the network publishes a topic-paper to identify core areas of agreement, disagreement and suggestions for where thinking may need to change to achieve better alignment where there are differences. Each paper will also identify possible next steps to develop policy thinking in that area.

**New-Pin** has three core objectives:

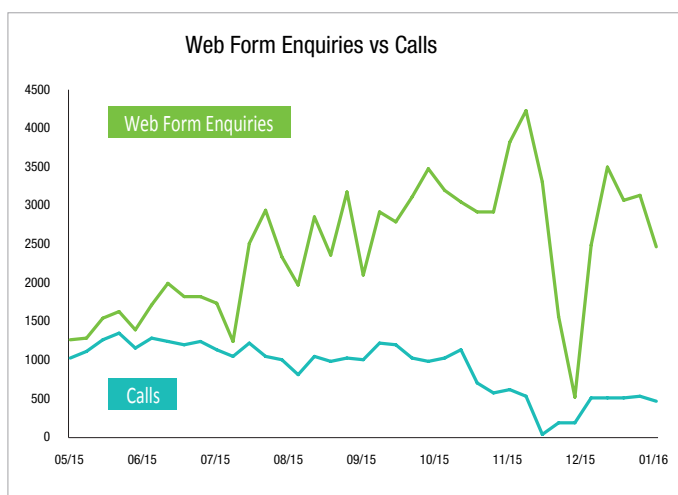
1. Consensus building workshops for the long-term public interest;
2. Capacity building within our stakeholder community for the long-term public interest; and
3. Strengthening company governance for the long-term public interest.

We are using **New-Pin** to build bridges between public interest representatives and investors and governance groups to reframe some of the key long-term debates and develop understanding. This informs our strategic thinking and will feed into long-term customer propositions and business plans.

## Customer website redesign

An increasing number of customers have told us that they prefer to self-serve online, rather than call us.

Usage trends support this, as the graph illustrates.



In 2015/16, we carried out research among customers to find out what they wanted from our website, and what it might be currently lacking.

### Key issues customers identified included:

- Not knowing who the website was directed at – believing it was aimed at business rather than domestic users
- Not being able to understand the basic services we offer upon entering the site
- Finding it difficult to navigate through the site.

In response, we have launched a project to redesign our website to make it more customer-friendly and easy to navigate. The new site is expected to launch in winter 2016.

Additional customer workshops, and the involvement of our stakeholder advisory panels as development progresses, will ensure the new site meets customer needs.

The site is set to include new innovative features to enhance customer convenience, such as the ability to report and track power cuts on our website.

# 35,000

Average number of monthly website visits

# 371,000

Number of website hits during Storm Desmond



## PART 2

# Engagement in storm conditions

In December 2015, Storm Desmond brought heavy rainfall and storm force winds to large parts of Cumbria and Lancashire. More than 6,000 homes and businesses were flooded.

Around 187,000 Electricity North West customers suffered power loss at some point due to flooded substations or downed overhead lines, requiring a major business-wide response.

Our communications and stakeholder liaison programme during the incident was informed by lessons learnt from the storms of 2013/14. Since those earlier storms, we have been an active participant in a number of external industry working groups to review all facets of flood response, and have adapted our practices accordingly.

The positive changes we made proved invaluable, as highlighted below.

### Liaison with regional partners

We worked closely with key regional service providers throughout the incident, including emergency services, local authorities, the Environment Agency and other utilities, and attended both Cumbria and Lancashire Gold and Silver command centres.

Following the storms in 2013/14, we revised our incident communications plan to place a greater emphasis on proactive communications with stakeholder, customers and media. We were heavily involved in industry and government working groups where we discussed best practice, and we also visited Northern Ireland Electricity to find out how they managed storms.

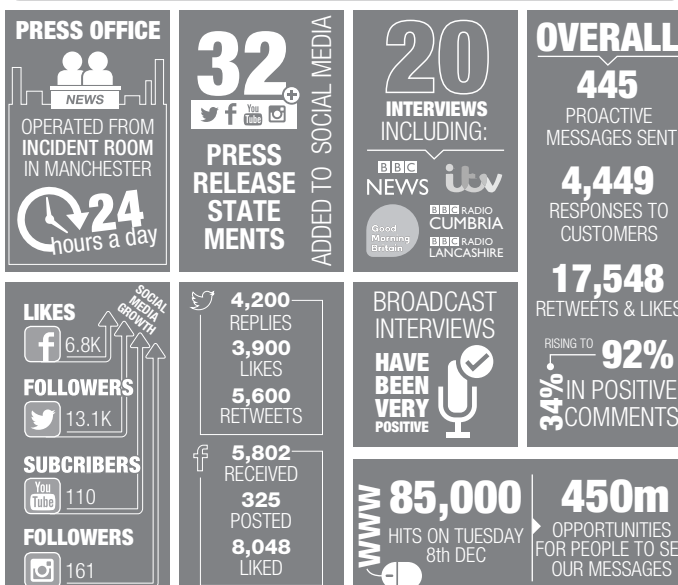
To be more proactive requires increased resource, so we trained colleagues in other roles to carry out media and stakeholder engagement during incidents enabling us to operate on a 24-hour rota to ensure proactive updates were issued round the clock every 2-3 hours.

All news updates were shared with the communications teams of all agencies involved in Gold and Silver command and communications issues were raised at the group with a communications presence on each call. We also spoke directly to individual communications teams regarding specific issues such as National Grid Gas, the local gas distribution network, when there was an issue with damage to electricity cables in close proximity to a gas main. There was also significant sharing of content on social media with partner agencies and widespread use of the #StormDesmond, #StormEva and #Staysafe hashtags.

## Our operational response



## Our media response



## PART 2

## MPs and other key influencers

"The storm brought the worst weather we have ever seen and left in its wake significant damage and major upheaval. None more so than for Electricity North West.

"I'd like to thank all of the Electricity North West engineers for all their hard work getting customers back on during a very difficult time.

"I also welcome Electricity North West's decision to take action following the flooding and invest a further £2.5m in flood defences at the substation which will help further protect power supplies in the area."

David Morris MP  
Morecambe and Lunesdale

## Media relations

Following the previous year's storms, we had trained up more people to act as media and stakeholder officers during incidents, rolled out media training to a further 20 managers, and had conducted externally-facilitated mock exercises for both our media and stakeholder response and our social media response.

These preparations proved invaluable during Storm Desmond. Journalists praised our accessibility, openness and proactive engagement through the incident while positive sentiment from customers on social media reached over 90% by the end of the week following Storm Desmond.

In January 2016 BBC Radio Lancashire awarded us a certificate in their own 'New Year's Honours' list in recognition of our service during the floods. This was presented to our Operations Director, Martin Deehan, who was interviewed on air and publically thanked for our response.

## Social media

Prior to Storm Desmond, we had commissioned an independent stress test and analysis of our social media arrangements, which led to us expanding our internal pool of social media responders, and installing a new social media customer relations tool.

During Storm Desmond, we had more than 4,000 direct engagements with customers on social media, and retweeted posts by key partner agencies, including emergency services. Positive sentiment for Electricity North West rose throughout the incident from an initial 34% to 92% at the close.



## Website

Our website became a valued source of latest news for customers, with more than 335,000 sessions by 164,700 users over seven days.

We carried out a full review and resilience testing of the website following the 2013/14 storms and those improvements meant that the website coped well with the enormous surge in traffic. We also added a new emergency pop-up to the website so that customers would immediately see our latest message when they visited the site.

## Community engagement

Our mobile catering contractors provided 22,000 customers with free hot food and drinks. Eight food vans were deployed with their locations communicated to customers via local radio and social media.

The British Red Cross, our vulnerable customer partner, carried out home visits to customers who needed additional support.

## Independent evaluation

To ensure we learn from the events of December 2015 we commissioned an independent report into our incident response from a leading PR agency Citypress. This report suggests that our handling showed best practice in crisis management and should be entered for industry awards.

"The overall communications response to Storm Desmond by Electricity North West was excellent."

Citypress PR independent report

# Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive 2015/16

Part 3



## PART 3

## Supporting vulnerable customers

In our 2015-2023 business plan, we set out a commitment to “providing enhanced support to all vulnerable customers.”

We believe passionately in keeping our vulnerable customers comfortable and reassured during a power outage, through tailored, proactive support. We have adopted the British Standard of Vulnerability, which commits us to recognising and responding to the many different types of vulnerability our customers can face as we understand our obligations in tackling social issues that are relevant to our vulnerable customers

Our service is only as good as our data, and over the last 12 months, we have launched a new Customer Relationship Management tool to improve the way we collect, store and integrate our vulnerable customer information. This new system allows us to engage with stakeholders and partners to improve the data we hold for vulnerable customers which leads to more effective interventions and outcomes.

We have created a more robust, company-wide focus on vulnerable customers, through the creation of four vulnerable customer managers in different business areas, training for front line colleagues and senior-level support.

Our activities are informed by feedback from customers on our Priority Services Register, to ensure what we do reflects genuine need, and is not based on our own assumptions.

We have also established a dedicated Vulnerable Customer Advisory Panel, made up of experts from a variety of sectors. We meet with the panel twice a year to review progress against a shared action plan. This also allows us to develop and utilise effective partnerships that deliver positive outcomes for our vulnerable customers.

Through these efforts, we have made great strides over the past year to ensure our vulnerable customers are fully supported, with our approach put to the test when the worst storms on record hit our region in December 2015. Our response demonstrated how our strategy and focus on assisting our vulnerable customers was fully embedded within the business and allowed our workforce to engage in an effective and impactful way.

**Steve Johnson**  
Chief Executive Officer



“Citizens Advice North Lancashire are seeing a marked increase in those in fuel poverty. It is often difficult to address policy issues whilst dealing with individual customers of businesses.

“We appreciate the opportunity afforded to us to raise concerns about issues of affordability, debt and vulnerability. Inviting us to discuss and influence policy that impacts upon the most vulnerable in the community is essential and appreciated.”

**Helen Greateorex**  
Operations Manager, Citizens Advice North Lancashire



## PART 3

## Developing skills, embedding best practice

We recognise that successful delivery of our vulnerable customer strategy requires participation from the whole business, including our delivery partners.

Over the past 12 months, we have rolled out training and awareness-raising programmes to involve the wider workforce and relevant contractors.

Our goal is to create a 'caring army' of colleagues, who have the skills, understanding and motivation to identify and support vulnerable customers. This key aspect of all call centre and frontline training means that we can effectively identify and record consumer vulnerability and match individual customers' needs to the range of services we are able to provide.

The training also reinforces the responsibility of each colleagues to respond flexibly to specific needs to ensure that we do the right thing for each customer.

### Training our site-based colleagues

In 2015/16, we provided training for all our site-based colleagues, to give them the skills to recognise signs of vulnerability and the confidence to engage these customers.

More than 1,100 colleagues have taken part in the training sessions to date, including jointers, engineers, excavation teams and reinstatement teams. The sessions cover:

- Understanding the Priority Service Register and its purpose
- How customers can register and the support we provide, such as welfare facilities, overnight accommodation and support from the British Red Cross – a key partner.
- How to work effectively and sensitively in customer properties and door knocking standards.

### More effective call-handling

Central to our consumer vulnerability strategy is a clear understanding of what consumer vulnerability looks like in our region. Using Priority Service Register data, we have identified 22 key areas of vulnerability for our region and we have used this to inform and develop to inform our consumer vulnerability strategy and stakeholder engagement approach.

Given this range of needs, there can be no 'one-size fits all' approach and we have introduced a variety of training programmes and partnerships to enhance the way colleagues interact with these vulnerable customers on the phone. Some examples are:-

- **MIND partnership**  
We are working with MIND to help customer care colleagues interact more effectively with customers who have mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, as these conditions can affect telephone communication. Eight call handlers have undergone initial training with MIND so far, with further sessions scheduled for the coming months.

Training covers issues such as the main types of challenging calls, what might be behind them and the importance of boundaries and limitations to and developing emotional resilience.

Alongside this, training will be developed to support our call centre staff to equip them with the appropriate skills needed to deal effectively with customers with Alzheimer's and Dementia particularly during power cuts and winter periods.

- **British Red Cross refresher training:**  
The British Red Cross is a key partner, providing home visits or telephone support to vulnerable customers. This refresher training covers the key elements of the partnership, so that colleagues can make appropriate referrals.
- **Post-call analysis:**  
We have introduced a new internal review process, in which customer care colleagues and their line manager listen back to recorded calls with vulnerable customers, and review the approach and outcomes. The focus is on empathy and dealing sensitively with the issues raised by the customer.
- The Call Quality process also now includes signposting to water companies within our footprint in response to the Energy Networks Association feedback.

### All about Eve

Last year, we missed an appointment slot with a vulnerable customer called Eve. It was our mistake, and quite rightly, she made a complaint.

Ultimately, this led to us working with Eve to make a training video for all customer facing colleagues. In the video, Eve talks frankly about her complex range of medical conditions, and the impact they have on her daily life.

The video brought to life the complex nature of vulnerability and the need for us to be able to offer tailored service alongside offering which is available for specific needs of the 'core' eligible groups of consumers.

She goes on to explain why a missed appointment or a visit without an appointment time can have significant repercussions for someone who is vulnerable. The video also brings home the impact colleagues' actions can have on someone who is vulnerable and what can be done to maximise positive outcomes.

This powerful video has been watched by over 1,100 colleagues and contractors to date, as part of a wider internal campaign to remind colleagues about the importance of keeping to appointment times and how to act appropriately working within customer properties.

"It might not necessarily be a medical vulnerability, it might be some other vulnerability like financial poverty or it might be around emotional support, not being able to cope with. It sounds silly at the outset, but someone who is really upset that they weren't able to check their Facebook account... other sort of mental health issues can escalate really quickly during an outage, so I think that sort of work around raising awareness of contact centre staff, so they can identify those characteristics which will lead to us providing those people with more support."

**Feedback from 2015 stakeholder research re: vulnerable customers**

## PART 3

## Improving data management

We recognize the importance of embedding our consumer vulnerability strategy into our systems and process and into the way we manage customer interactions and over the past 12 months we have made significant improvements in this area.

### Our new CRM system

In 2015 we launched a bespoke Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which has dramatically enhanced the way we record PSR information and interact with our vulnerable customers. This system provides a high-level of integration with the our general systems and processes.

#### Key features of the new system include:

##### Immediate identification of vulnerable customers during a power cut

- In the event of a power outage, our CRM system compiles details of all PSR registered customers in the affected postcode area, and raises tasks to ensure outbound phone calls are made to each household. High vulnerability customers are highlighted and prioritised.

##### Recording transient vulnerability

- We recognise that many customers are only vulnerable for a comparatively short time (e.g. hospital out-patients; elderly customers in winter months etc.). Our CRM system allows us to record an estimated end point for a customer's vulnerability. Once the time limit has been reached, the system prompts us to phone the customer to check progress and update our records.

##### Multiple contact numbers

- The system allows us to record names and numbers of relatives or carers of the vulnerable customer, so that we can keep them in the loop in the event of a power outage at the customer's home.

##### Vulnerable check box

- The CRM system prompts our call handlers to ask "do you need any additional support?" during each inbound customer call. Call handlers click a check box to confirm the question was asked during the conversation. We have added over 8,000 customers to our PSR in the past five months, simply as a result of asking this question.

##### A single, streamlined data repository

- Previously, we had multiple databases holding PSR information. Our new CRM system has allowed us to compile all information into one place, ensuring accuracy and avoiding duplication.

"I suppose it depends how much the vulnerable persons register can be refined, because a lot of people are generally vulnerable, if I can put it that way, and then a lot of people will be very specifically vulnerable."

Feedback from 2015 stakeholder survey re: vulnerable customers



## PART 3

## Data sharing

We are working with colleagues in other utility sectors to share vulnerable customer data, share ideas and best practice to establish more joined up ways of working. This stakeholder engagement approach forms part of our data acquisition strategy and will inform our approach to improving our support for vulnerable consumers.

With the introduction of the new Vulnerable Needs Codes across the Energy industry, we will undertake a forensic review of our most vulnerable customers during times of faults and outages. Our internal systems will provide the data we need to understand the challenges faced by our customers, which in turn will help us tailor the most effective support. This approach will enable Electricity North West to place vulnerable customers at the heart of our decision making for areas such as generation during power loss and also allow us to determine who our most appropriate welfare partners would be to collaborate with.

### Preparing for Unique Property Reference Numbers

Ordnance Survey is launching address software which will provide all properties with a unique identifier, known as the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN).

This will support our goal of consistently seeking to improve the data and information that we hold on vulnerable customers. It will replace the current methods of property validation and will help improve issues around address duplication, making it easier for us to align PSR data correctly to specific properties. It plays a key role in our data acquisition and management strategy.

In preparation for the changes, our data management team is enhancing our Network Management System to ensure our systems are prepared for these changes use of the data is improving and influencing our service development and delivery.

### Storm Desmond: Putting our approach to the test

Storm Desmond and Storm Eva saw large areas of Lancashire and Cumbria lashed by high winds, heavy rain and flooding.

187,000 Electricity North West customers lost power due to storm-related network damage, requiring us to provide support to thousands of vulnerable customers.

Vulnerable customers in affected postcode areas were identified by our new CRM system, and proactive calls were made to 6,500 customers. We maintained contact with these customers throughout both incidents, providing regular updates and ensuring they were safe and well.

Throughout the incident, we provided support in line with a wider social role. Adapting our approach to complex needs in a very challenging environment, enabled us to deliver our services in line with the objective of making the most of what a network company does. Key to this was effective data, resource and response management and sharing which was delivered in partnership with other stakeholders through our planned incident response approach.

During these periods we came across many vulnerable customers in need of support, some in desperate circumstances. We ensured customers who contacted us were offered welfare support by British Red Cross, by receiving visits, hot drinks, food and vulnerable packs. This provided invaluable support to our most vulnerable customers who were flooded and on many occasions alone at their properties.

There were also visits made by Air Liquide to oxygen dependent customers who contacted to advise they were running low.

We provided around 22,000 hot meals, free of charge, in storm hit communities in Lancashire and Cumbria, by deploying catering vans.

We also took the opportunity to update of our PSR data, as a result of the many conversations we had with customers during this period.

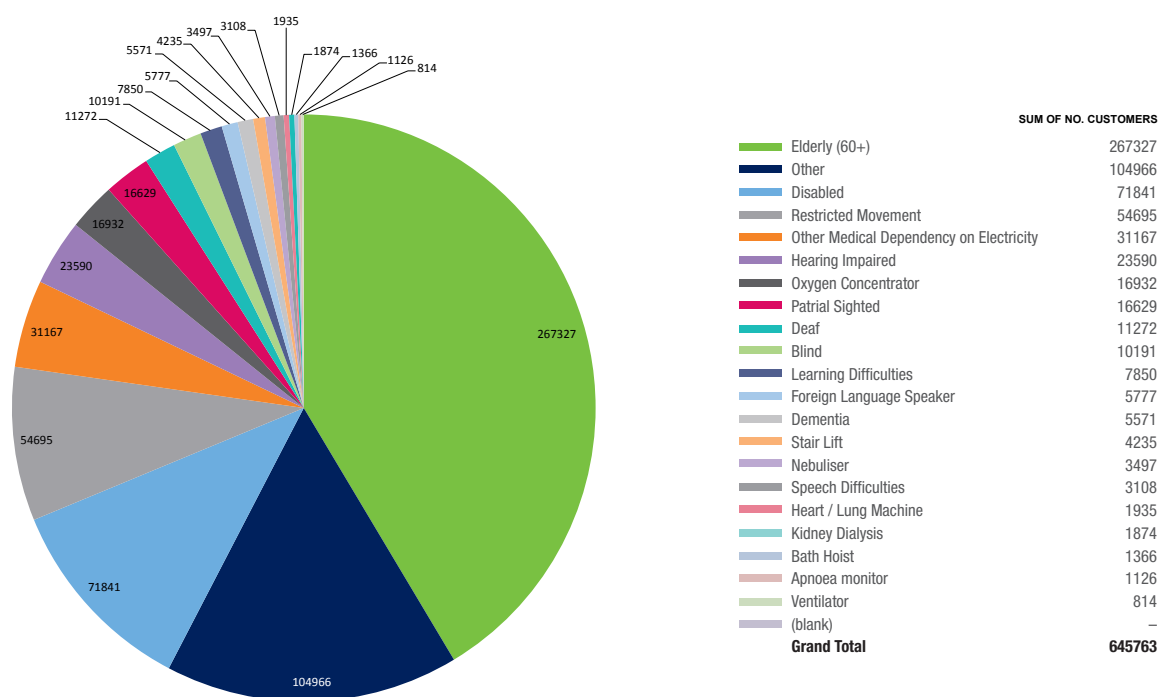
"When somebody moves home, how do they get notified of that person leaving and moving to a new residence? Or if somebody moves into a property who is temporarily unable to look after themselves? I think that is a really difficult list, that PSR has to manage."

**Feedback from 2015 stakeholder research re: vulnerable customers.**

## PART 3

# Vulnerability consumer data January 2016

Our data-led approach ensures our outcomes and outputs are delivering for our vulnerable customers



Our vulnerable customer advisory panel consists of the following organisations:

- Action on Hearing Loss
- Alzheimer's Society
- Bolton local authority
- British Red Cross
- Calico Homes
- Cumbria Action for Sustainability
- Emergency Planning and Resilience Lancashire County Council
- Citizens Advice North Lancashire
- NEA
- Stockport council





## PART 3

## Working in partnership

Central to our strategy is the development and utilisation of partnerships to identify and deliver solutions for vulnerable customers. Building partnerships with organisations from different sectors helps us engage with vulnerable customers whom we may otherwise struggle to reach. It also allows to be efficient in the delivery of support as we are able to leverage the resources of our partner organisations to deliver meaningful customer outcomes.

### Recent collaborative projects include:

#### Marple Mellor and Marple Bridge Energy Saving Strategy (MESS) group

We teamed up with this local environment group in Stockport for a community day in which a range of companies gave energy saving advice. We took the opportunity to promote our PSR and Smart Meter and Cut out (SMCO) pilot, gaining new participants for both schemes.

#### Housing association partnerships

We are in the process of forging links with local housing associations, to help us identify and engage vulnerable customers.

There is still a considerable amount of work to do in this area, but we have already made inroads with Regenda Housing, who have 22,000 tenants across the North West and with Wythenshaw Community Housing in Manchester. Further meetings with both organisations will be taking place this year in 2016/17.

#### Lancaster storm resilience

Lancaster was especially badly hit by storms and flooding over the Christmas and New Year period.

In response, Electricity North West, together with Lancaster Police, Lancaster Fire and Rescue, Neighbourhood Policing and Lancaster County Council have developed a network of local partner organisations to collaborate on storm resilience strategies and support for vulnerable customers.

Initial meetings have been held and further sessions occurred in April 2016.

#### Forging new partnerships in Cumbria

A combination of an elderly population (27% of residents aged 60+) and a preponderance of overhead power lines means that customers in Cumbria can be especially vulnerable in the event of severe weather.

Over the past 12 months, we have continued to build relationships with local Cumbrian communities to promote our PSR and explore other ways of supporting residents during extreme weather.

To this end, we held an engagement day with local residents in Millom, to help them develop their own community resilience plans to cope with severe weather events. It was attended by ourselves, Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Neighbourhood Watch Agency and the Environment Agency.

*"In a county like Cumbria, you have to constantly work at getting the information out to people. You have to constantly work at identifying the people who need to be contacted, who need to be looked after."*

Feedback from 2015 stakeholder survey re: vulnerable customers

#### Pop-up energy shop

We partnered with Contact, a local theatre company, and the Rio Ferdinand Foundation, to help engage with hard to reach local residents in Walkden, Salford on the issue of fuel poverty.

A team of young people transformed an empty shop into a hands-on installation, enabling residents to explore the way they perceive the energy in their community.

More than 80 members of the community took part.

#### The effect of power cuts on the elderly

To discuss the affects of power cuts on the elderly and learn from various sources we gathered their thoughts and suggestions on how we can best support them. We have worked with:

### Welfare partners

- Age UK
- Public Health England
- Cumbria Neighbourhood Watch
- Dementia UK
- Mencap
- British Gas
- Cumbria County Council
- South Lakeland District Council

### What's next?

#### Local charities:

Following the severe storms and flooding in late December 2015 and early 2016, a number of local charities told us that they would be keen to work with us to support local communities during future events of this kind.

As a result, we are aiming to forge closer links with charities such as Alzheimer's UK in the Blackburn and Burnley areas and meetings commenced in April 2016.

#### Stockport Council:

Further charity collaboration will take place with Stockport Council's Wellbeing and Independence Network which is a new network of services providing practical help to adults. This assistance is aimed specifically at older people, people with a wide range of disabilities or poor mobility, and their carers. Meetings have been arranged for April 2016 to attempt to discuss any support Electricity North West can provide and also to raise the profile of the PSR.

#### Warrington Disability Partnership:

Meetings have been arranged for April 2016 to discuss any support Electricity North West can provide for its service users and also to raise the profile of the PSR.

## PART 3

## Tailored support

Understanding the impact that external drivers and events can have on vulnerable customers can really help us to tackle issues external to the sector whilst providing core and tailored support. Over the past 12 months, we have enhanced the way we support our vulnerable customers during power cuts, and given customers advanced warning of the arrival of severe weather. This provides us with the opportunity to better understand needs and to support customers in preparing for and responding to such event.

Our approach has been guided by feedback from vulnerable customers, gathered via surveys in 2014/15 and 2015/16.

### PSR induction pack

74% of vulnerable customers surveyed in 2014/15 told us an induction pack would be helpful when signing up to the PSR.

Stakeholders are quick to highlight the importance of improving communication and question the practicalities of offering additional services like personal visits and priority restoration. Below items are based on feedback we've received:

REACTION TO ADDITIONAL SERVICES	
✓✓	An induction pack with warm clothing, blankets, windup torches etc.
	Priority given in restoring power during a power cut
✓	Portable generators
✓	Rechargeable light bulbs
✓	Refreshments delivered to homes
	Emergency packs e.g. blankets
✓✓	Direct dial numbers
	Information being available in different formats (e.g. Braille)
✓	Charging points e.g. mobile
	Personal visits from engineers
✓✓✓	Suitable phones

We sent more than 250 packs to vulnerable customers during the storm periods and we have dedicated Customer Champion staff at each of our 14 depots to ensure the efficiency of the delivery and inventory.

### Pack items:

- Flasks
- Thermal Mugs
- Blankets
- Gloves
- Hats
- Fridge Magnets
- Pens
- Note Pads
- Hand warmers
- Glow Torches
- Analogue Phones
- PSR Leaflets
- Additional Support Leaflet
- Envelopes (Large)
- Envelopes (Small)
- Key ring torches
- Carrier Bags

Supporting consumer vulnerability and embedding understanding of this in our systems, processes and customer interactions is central to our strategy. Here are some examples as how this is demonstrated in our business.

### Cutting the queues

In 2015, we introduced a means of automatically identifying PSR customers when they call us, so they are put straight through to a call handler, avoiding the automated telephony system.

### The four hour rule

Our key partner organisations told us they felt support was needed to be given to vulnerable customers within the first four hours of a power cut.

### Weather notices

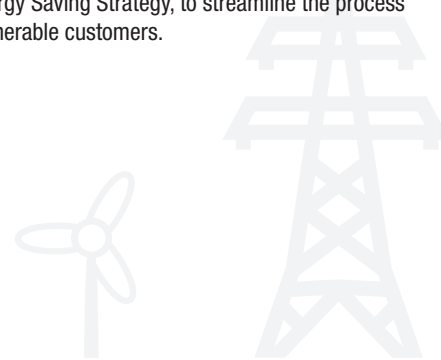
63% of vulnerable customers told us that we should be proactive in communicating information in the event of bad weather, and 89% agreed we should provide advanced notice of imminent storms. We have now implemented this into business as usual as evidenced by our storms response in December 2015.

### Trip switch call outs

When new smart meters are being installed in customers' homes, if the 'cut out' equipment — is old, the meter installer usually has to apply to Electricity North West for us to change it.

The most common scenario was a 'trip switch', where the internal fuse that protects a customer's private wiring switches to the off position, due to a minor issue such as a blown bulb.

In response, we are launching a trial with Stockport Council and Marple, Mellor and Marple Bridge Energy Saving Strategy, to streamline the process and reduce the impact on vulnerable customers.



## PART 3



### Smart meter 'cut out' pilot

When new smart meters are being installed in customers' homes, if the 'cut out' equipment is old, the meter installer usually has to apply to Electricity North West for us to change it.

This can result in several appointments at a customer's home before the new smart meter is finally installed.

For vulnerable customers (e.g. mobility issues) this can present a considerable challenge.

In response, we are launching a trial with Stockport Council and Marple, Mellor & Marple Bridge Energy Saving Strategy, to streamline the process and reduce impact on vulnerable customers.

Our trial area has a high density of older, vulnerable residents.

As well as reducing appointments through collaboration with meter installers, we will also be using interaction with vulnerable customers during the trial to update our PSR data and provide customers with information on energy efficiency.

"I heard about this light bulb. It sounds like a really small thing, but it is such a good idea because being in the dark is enough to set people off completely, and if they have some form of light in at least one room, I think that also it is such a simple thing."

Feedback from 2015 stakeholder research re: vulnerable customers



### Focused network investment

Our RIIO investment plan includes provision for additional investment in strategic parts of the network that serve buildings and communities with high numbers of vulnerable customers.

**Over the next two years, we will upgrade parts of our network supplying:**

- 42 hospitals
- 87 substations in high PSR communities.

### Reducing the impact of planned outages in winter

Planned power outages for network maintenance can have a much greater impact in the cold winter months.

In response to feedback from vulnerable customers and stakeholders we have reduced the number and duration of planned outages during the winter months.

We now avoid outages before 9am, and ensure power is restored before 4pm – ensuring customers have power during the darkest and coldest parts of the day.

The weather is also monitored for both storms and cold snaps and outages are cancelled if they pose a risk to customers.

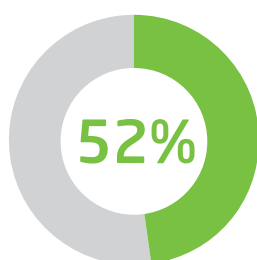
## 75 mobile generators

were deployed during Storm Desmond,  
maintaining supplies to 22,000 customers

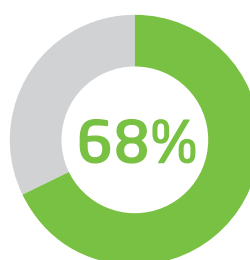
## PART 3

## Awareness of / and confidence in the existing PSR

More needs to be done to increase awareness of PSR. Although most customers are aware of some of the services, very few know the complete range.

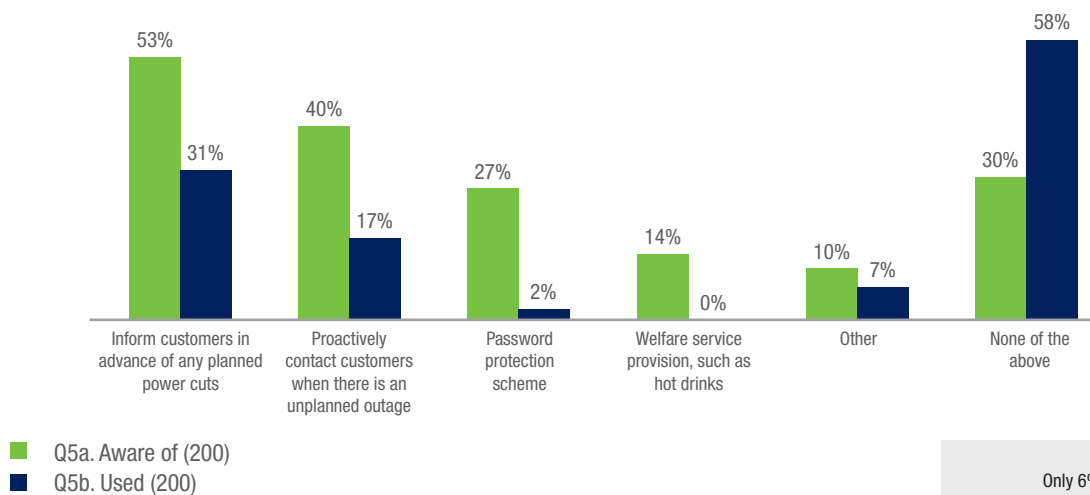


Aware that Electricity North West offer a PSR



Confidence that Electricity North West will be there for you when you need them

### Services on the PSR



Only 6% of customers are aware of the full range of services





## PART 3

## Raising awareness

Our approach to management and use of the Priority Services Register and our associated services is driven by the commitment to increase the number of customers captured on the register. Our strategy is informed by good data analysis and includes both broadcast and targeted approaches to recruitment. Our stakeholder network is also an important Priority Services Register customer referral route.

A benchmark customer survey in 2014 revealed that just 38% of customers were aware of Electricity North West.

Since then, we have launched a multi-channel marketing campaign to raise regional awareness.

The campaign ran in 2014/15 and 2015/16 and included radio, print and social media advertising, along with a comprehensive review of our customer-facing literature and website.

Awareness now stands at 45% – a significant increase, and one we will continue to build upon.

Awareness has risen from  
**38% to 48%**

### Key activity from the past 12 months include:

#### Dedicated PSR section of website

We have created a dedicated PSR section on our website, to increase the number of web applications.

This includes a customer-facing video, produced in partnership with the British Red Cross, explaining what the PSR is, the type of support on offer and how to register.

We have also added a new FAQs section and provided more guidance for vulnerable customers about what to do in a power cut.

We have recorded just over 1,000 PSR web applications over the past 12 months.

#### Improved PSR leaflet

In order to make it easier for customers to register offline, we developed a new and improved PSR leaflet which includes a detachable application form and freepost envelope. This is also available as a downloadable leaflet on our website.

#### Hot spot areas

We used tactical messages in power cut hot spot areas (e.g. areas with lots of overhead power lines). As a result, knowledge of what to do in a power cut increased by 14% in Cumbria and 10% in Lancashire.

#### Local community magazines

Feedback from customers affected by storms in 2014/15 revealed that many used local community magazines to find useful numbers and information.

As a result, we invested in full page advertorials in the winter editions of eight different magazines across Cumbria, including:

- Editorial (Extra support in a Power Cut) in the Able Magazine March 2016

And attended the MESS event on 12 March in Marple, Stockport.





## APPENDIX 1

# Energy Networks Association (ENA) Joint Stakeholder Submission Appendix

ENA's Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) Stakeholder Best Practice Working Group is a group which was formalised as an ENA group in 2015/2016. It brings together DNOs for the purpose of sharing stakeholder best practice and identifying national stakeholders with the aim of working collaboratively across DNOs. Going forward into 2016/2017 it will also encompass the subgroup for Stakeholder and Communications that had previously sat under ENA's Safeguarding Customers Working Group.

This group focuses on all aspects of stakeholder engagement, and this year extended their collaboration to include Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs), Gas and Electricity Transmission Operators (TOs), Suppliers and Independent Network Operators. The group's aim is to look for initiatives where a collaborative approach would benefit all and identify Stakeholders for National Engagement.

During 2015/2016 several activities have been developed – for example – collaboratively working on the Single Emergency Number, Community Energy Events, which will achieve benefits for stakeholders in 2016/2017.

**Key Themes for this group for 2016/2017 will be to focus on the following topics**

- Annual Performance Reporting
- Awareness
- Community Energy
- Single Emergency Number
- Smart Meter Roll Out
- Vulnerable Customers

**The group now plan to work collaboratively on these and for each theme the DNOs will:**

- Identify existing ENA groups relevant to the topic and outputs they are delivering relevant to key themes.
- Identify any other stakeholders that need to be involved

The DNOs will also be developing individual actions plans for each theme and these will be reviewed by the group regularly throughout the year.

The group will be developing an overall ENA Stakeholder Engagement plan for dissemination of the networks activities in regard to these themes and this will look to identify the key national stakeholders and how the networks should be engaging with them.