

Consumer Vulnerability Activities and Outcomes

Ofgem Stakeholder Engagement and
Consumer Vulnerability Incentive 2017/18



Blank page

Contents

Electricity North West Limited is the electricity distributor for the North West of England. We own, invest in, operate and maintain the network of poles, wires, transformers and cables which carry electricity from the national grid to 2.4 million premises and five million customers.

We are proud of the essential role we play for our customers and the investment we make locally and nationally to meet our stakeholders' and customers' needs.

This document is the Electricity North West Part Three submission to Ofgem's Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) Incentive for the regulatory year 2017/18.

The SECV incentive is an annual scheme that encourages network companies to engage proactively with stakeholders in order to understand and deliver services which reflect these needs. The submission is divided into three parts:

Part 1 : Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Strategies

Part 2 : Stakeholder Engagement Activities and Outcomes

Part 3 : Consumer Vulnerability Activities and Outcomes

CEO Welcome	1
Working in partnership with our Vulnerable Customer Advisory Panel	2
Objective 1 - Working with partners to promote the Priority Service Register	3
Objective 2 - Strategic understanding of consumer vulnerability	4-5
Objective 3 - Embedding consumer vulnerability into our processes and procedures	6-7
Objective 4 - Using data as the foundation of our strategy	8-9
Objective 5 - Managing our Welfare Services and Priority Service Register	10
Next steps	10

Blank page

Supporting Vulnerable Customers: Translating research and insight into outcomes

We transport energy to some of the most socially and economically deprived communities in the UK. It is a key part of our Purpose to support the North West community and in particular those customers who become vulnerable when they experience a loss of electricity.

Vulnerability touches all of us. My management team and I are committed to play our part in addressing this important social issue; it's the right thing to do.

Research carried out by the Energy Saving Trust referenced in last year's submission has been put to work this year and has enhanced our understanding of our wider social role. Over the past 12 months, we have developed our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy and have effectively utilised partnerships to make the most of what a network company can do to address a range of social issues.

We have worked with a range of partner organisations to set up three new fuel poverty referral networks – creating a varied and region-wide support structure that will help our more vulnerable customers, both now, and in the future. We are also building social impacts into our future investment plans as we evolve our business to better align with the needs of our customers.

We continued to learn about how supply interruptions affect different types of customers and we now plan the delivery of all of our services with our Priority Service Register (PSR) in mind. A power cut can create instant vulnerability, where none existed before, and by being more attuned to these wider social impacts, we have been able to tailor our services in response.

We have proactively continued to grow our Priority Services Register (PSR) through targeted campaigns – with more than 603,000 customers now on our database.

To further improve the data we hold, we've started a new partnership with United Utilities, the region's water and wastewater provider, to share PSR data and create simpler, more streamlined experience for customers.

This industry-leading initiative is creating the template for information sharing across the utility sector.

Our company Purpose commits that 'Together we have the energy to transform our communities' and helping transform the experience of our most vulnerable customers is central to this ambition.



Peter Emery
Chief Executive Officer

Key metrics

603k

PSR customers

**More than
66,000**

vulnerable customers
proactively contacted
during supply loss

89%

customer
satisfaction for
proactive Priority
Service Register
contact

528

fuel poor
customers
supported

**More than
£357k**

benefits identified
for fuel poor
customers

Invested £0.3m to
create a six-strong
welfare team

Created three fuel
poverty referral
networks

Developed
industry-leading
partnership with
United Utilities

Introduced vulnerability
dashboard to inform
all business decision
making



Toni Byrne, Customer Welfare Team, working with Age UK to promote our PSR in Cumbria

Our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy

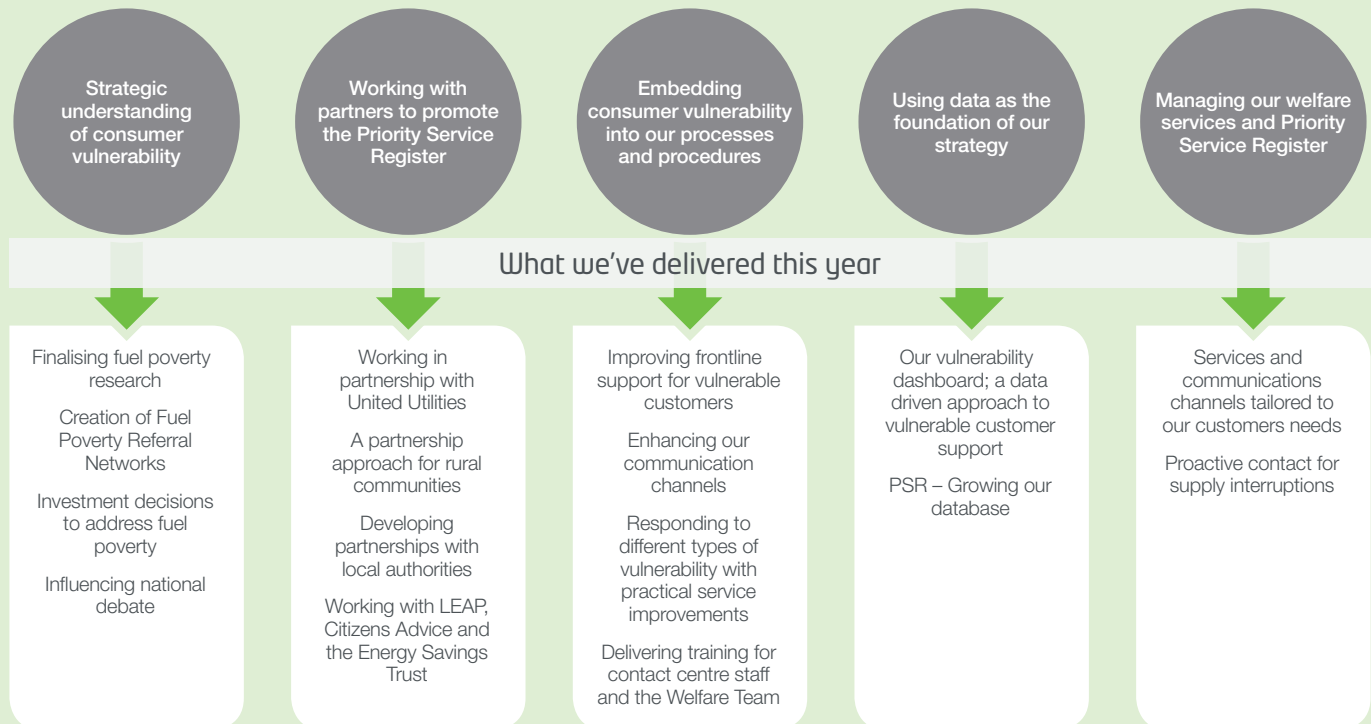
Our goal is to ensure that our services are available and accessible to all our customers, regardless of their personal circumstances and to embed this goal throughout all aspects of our business. Last year, we formalised our Customer Vulnerability Strategy and this sets out our framework to achieve our goal.

The Strategy is embedded in our Business Plan Commitments – these were devised in collaboration with stakeholders and agreed with Ofgem. Part three of our submission describes the activity we have undertaken this year to achieve our goal and to build on the strong foundations created last year.



Jack Collier visiting one of our PSR customers

Our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy in action



Working in partnership with our Vulnerable Customer Advisory Panel

Our Vulnerable Consumer Advisory Panel provides oversight and scrutiny of the company's activity in support of vulnerable customers. Last year, we developed a number of SMART objectives in partnership with the Panel aligned to our Customer Vulnerability Strategy.

Progress against these objectives is reviewed regularly with the Panel. We'll continue to develop these objectives with the Panel and to review them to ensure that they remain relevant to our vulnerable customers.

The Panel has also continued to provide insight and advice on changes and improvements to our services. For example, we discussed our policy with regard to the distribution of welfare packs with them and they advised that it would be appropriate to adapt our approach. As a result we've stopped distributing the packs during the summer months, saving £40k. This funding has been reinvested to fund one of our three Fuel Poverty Referral Networks,

Area	Specific Measures	Information / How	How
Promotion of the PSR	Monitoring of % improvement by referral	To agree how with Advisory Panel and then use URL checks and collate administration information	Local Energy Action Plan, Citizens Advice, Energy Saving Trust and United Utilities data share. Promotion including pharmacy bags and advertising
Effective Contact Strategy	100% of high vulnerabilities contacted for PSI 100% of high vulnerabilities contacted for fault	All communication channels to be used - monitor the volume from Customer Relationship Management system against actual attempts made	Current performance is 100% for all flagged activities We have contacted through calls and text over 119,000 PSR customer or their next of kin this year
Data Strategy	Contact all high vulnerabilities per annum Contact a third of all medium / high customers per year		Customers contacted include 84,145 letters issued 24,130 emails 66,000 by telephone
Welfare Provisions	Ensure sign language and subtitles are utilised more for communications Stop welcome packs due to cost	Standardised our videos on the website Stop issuing	Website brand guidelines include the need for subtitles We use the blankets and torches in fault scenarios as required
CSAT in a fault	PSR Customers proactively communicated to in a fault - 87% target - 89% stretch	Independent customer research	89% customer satisfaction

A partnership approach to PSR registration

While the growth in Priority Services Register (PSR) customers is encouraging, our stakeholders have pointed out that the PSR sign-up process is far from efficient, when viewed from an industry-wide perspective.

Customers in vulnerable circumstances are faced with multiple contacts by utility companies (water, gas, electricity), each providing their own register. This can be both frustrating and confusing for vulnerable customers and their families.

Stakeholders have challenged us to take inspiration from the 'Tell us Once' approach by local authorities, in which a customer provides essential information once – and the local council then passes this on to other key service providers.

In response, we have teamed up with United Utilities, the North West's water company, for a PSR data-sharing trial. This has seen both companies sign a data-sharing agreement to provide each other with new PSR customer data, over a 12 week period. So far, 80% of customers have taken up the service. (1,500 customers).

As part of the trial, both organisations are gathering qualitative feedback from customers, to see how they feel about data being shared.

The United Utilities partnership complements the arrangements we have had in place for the past 12 months with Cadent, the North West gas network operator, who provide us with PSR referrals from their customers. Ultimately, we are hoping we can move towards a single, shared PSR database, which should allow all partners to provide a more responsive service.

Continued working with Cadent and the Energy Networks Association Working Group to explore what this approach would mean to the sector and ensure we share our best practice to bring the benefits nationwide.

This is an industry-leading approach to data sharing

A partnership approach for Rural Communities

The research from Energy Saving Trust showed us that the cause of fuel poverty was very different in rural areas compared to urban areas. Large, older homes and those without mains gas supply in rural areas can be harder to heat and maintain leading to householders living in fuel poverty. People living in rural areas can also be more vulnerable, due to the remote location they live in and the consequent problems including accessing services.

We are therefore supporting a three year research programme with Rural England looking at community service infrastructure in rural areas. The outcome of this project is to look at how we best deliver our welfare and fuel poverty services in our rural areas. This year Rural England has undertaken a consultation programme with rural parish councils to understand their levels of awareness of our Priority Services Register and their willingness to engage with Electricity North West in the promotion of our welfare services.

Tell us Once – Data sharing trial.

The data sharing trial is a great example of shared accountability, learning, and working processes and practices.

We have received positive feedback with customers welcoming the two companies working jointly and only having to register once.

Simple measures with great outcomes, for example:

Mrs B spoke to United Utilities about her current bill and was asked for consent to share her details with Electricity North West. We already had Mrs B identified as a pensionable age PSR customer; however, the United Utilities data had been updated to reflect that Mrs B also had a chronic serious illness which meant she needed more support as she is now electricity dependant.

Mr X contacted Electricity North West regarding a power cut, and consent was given to share his details with United Utilities. When they contacted him the advisor looked at his account and changed him to a 'WaterSure Tariff' giving him a saving of £700 per year on his water bill.

We have exchanged nearly 1,500 customers with United Utilities.

Of the records sent from United Utilities so far:

395
new registrations

67%
already registered

33%
new vulnerabilities
added to current
customers
on the PSR

Electricity North West is very focussed on working with United Utilities for the good of the customer, primarily around the area of customer vulnerability. Our respective organisations are serving the same customers, and ultimately our goal is to work proactively to provide a quality and seamless utilities service for our customers.

Electricity North West and United Utilities are bound by the same vision with regards to the importance of focussing on vulnerable customers. We've come together with an equally strong motivation to share ideas on how we can make tangible improvements in our services in this area.

Working with Electricity North West has been rewarding as they are always open to ideas from external parties. They are a truly valuable company to partner with.

Amanda Philips, United Utilities
Priority Services Lead

Developing partnerships with Local Authorities

The Energy Saving Trust research identified fuel poverty 'hot spot' areas across our network. Our Value of Lost Load research tells us that the impact of a loss of supply has a greater negative effect on customers in fuel poverty than it does on other customer groups.

Initial detailed analysis of incidence of fuel poverty, by Local Authority area, mapped to supply reliability is shown here.

As well as informing our network investment, this mapping is informing our partnership-building approach. We have begun the process of reaching out to Local Authorities and social housing providers in these areas to develop tailored partnerships to address this issue. These partnerships will undertake activities in addition to promoting the PSR.

Supply reliability

		Fuel Poverty		
		Low	Average	High
Supply reliability	Poor	West Lancs		Eden, Craven
	Average	Cheshire East, South Lakeland	Ribble Valley, Copeland, Allerdale, Carlisle, High Peak	
	Good	Trafford, Fylde, Warrington, Wyre, Chorley, South Ribble	Stockport, St Helens, Wigan, Bury, Salford, Tameside, Oldham, Rossendale, Rochdale, Bolton	Pendle, Manchester, Burnley, Hyndburn, Preston, Blackburn, Blackpool, Barrow, Lancaster

Strategic understanding of consumer vulnerability

We transport energy to some of the most socially and economically deprived communities in the UK. It is a key part of our Purpose to support the North West community and in particular those customers who become vulnerable as a result of the operation of our network.

Lancashire and Morecambe suffered from the highest levels of winter deaths in the UK 2017/18 and we're committed to ensuring poorer customers are not left behind as the UK energy sector changes.

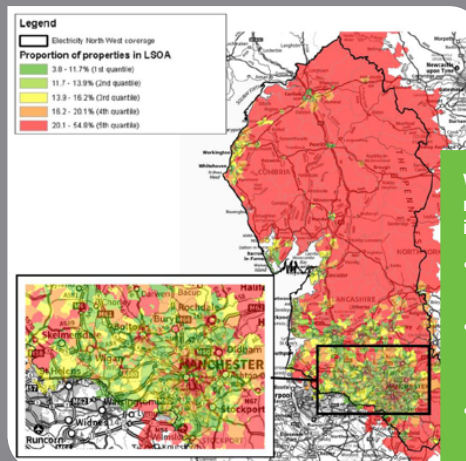
By better understanding the circumstances of customers who are struggling to heat their homes, we can make sure our day-to-day service delivery and future network strategies are driven by social impacts as well as technological need.

Working with the Energy Saving Trust to enhance our strategic understanding

As referenced in our 2017 submission, we commissioned the Energy Saving Trust to carry out a comprehensive study into the nature of fuel poverty in the North West of England, and to recommend practical ways in which Electricity North West can help to tackle the issue.

The research highlighted the diverse nature of fuel poverty in the North West. While 50% of fuel poor customers live in Greater Manchester – by far the largest population centre in our network – fuel poverty is actually more prevalent, proportionally, in rural areas, such as Cumbria. Here, there are a higher proportion of customers living in older, less energy efficient properties, off the gas grid.

The incidence of fuel poverty in our region is shown here.



We are acting on its recommendations, in four distinct areas:

- Creating referral networks
- Developing partnerships with Local Authorities
- Targeted approach to our network investment programme
- Influencing national policy

Creating a referral network for vulnerable customers

The Energy Saving Trust recommended creating a referral network, working with expert partners, to support fuel poor customers facing these very different circumstances. In 2017/18, we invested £115k in developing these services through partnerships.

1. Local Energy Advice Programme (LEAP): In partnership with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) we are providing dedicated support for fuel poor customers in Greater Manchester through the Local Energy Advice Programme.

Colleagues from Electricity North West identify customers potentially facing fuel poverty (either on the phone, or face-to-face in local communities) and then refer these customers to LEAP. Experts from LEAP carry out home visits, to assess circumstances and provide a range of support, including home insulation, benefits checks, debt advice, energy switching and grant applications for higher cost measures such as new boilers.

Through this relationship we also connected Certas (heating oil supplier) with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and they also now supporting the LEAP programme. They are also working with GMCA to support the vulnerable customers not connected to the gas network.

As well as making direct referrals to LEAP, we have also funded 250 referral 'credits' to be used by local authorities in the Greater Manchester area – extending the reach of the scheme even further and enabling 'hard to reach' customers in deprived communities to benefit from this investment.

Support available to our customers through our new LEAP partnership includes:

- Draught-proofing (windows, doors, letterbox)
- Chimney balloons
- Hot water cylinder jacket
- LED lamps
- Radiator panels
- TV standby plug
- Shower aerator
- Training on heating controls
- Identify possible ECO measures (loft, cavity, boiler)
- Install simple energy efficiency measures
- Energy efficiency advice
- Energy Supplier Switching
- Income maximisation

250
customers
supported

£237,418*
benefit to customers

45%
added to PSR
register

* calculation based on 10 year savings

More than
£357k
customer benefit
identified

£115k
invested in three
referral networks

2. North Lancashire Citizens' Advice (CA): We first started working with this organisation following the devastation caused by Storm Desmond in 2015. In October 2017, forged a more formal, long-term partnership to help alleviate fuel poverty and associated vulnerability in North Lancashire. Having the highest number of winter deaths in the UK means that this issue is a priority for all organisations.

North Lancashire Citizens Advice provide a weekly energy drop in service where an advisor will provide appropriate advice and support including energy saving tips, switching suppliers and if appropriate welfare and debt advice.

200
customers
supported

£48,041
benefit to customers

56%
added to PSR
register

3. Energy Saving Trust: Similar to LEAP, colleagues from Electricity North West identify customers potentially living in fuel poverty and then refer them to Energy Saving Trust. Advisors from Energy Saving Trust contact customers to provide appropriate advice including installation of simple energy measures, how to switch suppliers and energy saving tips. If appropriate the advisor will refer a customer to welfare and debt advice services.

This service enables us to provide support to customers not covered by the other two referral schemes.

78
customers
supported

£72,000*
benefit to customers

20%
added to PSR
register

* calculation based on savings over two years

1. Local Energy Action Plan – Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Mrs O from Salford was referred from Electricity North West due to the call centre advisor's concerns about draughts at her property making her extremely cold and worried for her health and wellbeing. A LEAP visit was arranged and the assessor highlighted areas where energy could be saved - for example by effectively using her Economy 7 tariff. The assessor installed radiator reflector panels, a door brush (which has stopped draught immensely) as well as the new low energy bulbs, which Mrs O said "are superb and are much brighter". Overall, Mrs O is extremely grateful for the help and advice and she would recommend it to anyone. Mrs O no longer feels worried about her property being cold and her health.



Mrs T from Rochdale told a welfare advisor that she had a broken boiler which was causing her anxiety as she has health conditions that are made worse by the cold. A LEAP visit was swiftly booked in and Mrs T said that the assessor was "absolutely fantastic and made me feel nice and settled". He installed LED bulbs which Mrs T thinks are much brighter and have made reading a lot easier, and he encouraged her to try some 'energy pledges' to reduce her bills. She was checked to ensure she was claiming Warm Home Discount. A referral was made for a boiler replacement, paid for through ECO funding plus a top-up from the local authority, which has made her home much warmer. Mrs T says 'I can't thank you enough for all the help you have given me it has made my life so much better'.

2. North Lancashire Citizens Advice

Mr A is 72 and lives alone on a small occupational pension. He was on the highest rate of Attendance Allowance, providing him a total weekly income of £208.60 per week, and struggling to keep on top of his bills. He was referred to Citizens Advice by his local GP as his boiler had stopped working and he now had no heating other than coal fire and no hot water. His disability and lack of hot water meant that he was unhappy and desperately wanted a bath.



The support resulted in Mr A receiving a benefit check and claims for pension credit and council tax support which increased his income to £309.31 per week, an application to a trust fund resulted in the fitting of a new boiler to the value of £1866.48, checks on utility costs and a fixed rate agreement made with another supplier saving client £7.20 per week.

Mr A is much more settled and his health and wellbeing have improved. He said now feels "happier in himself". He might take up offer of some social gatherings and certainly feels warmer and financially more secure.

3. Energy Saving Trust

Ms D has lived at her property for 30 years and wasn't aware of the help and advice available when considering cheaper, alternative options for her electricity. Ms D was contacted by Electricity North West as she was involved in a planned supply outage. Whilst she was speaking to the Welfare Team advisor it was discovered that the customer had no gas at the property, she lived alone and didn't really go out of the house but said she was fine with the outage as she didn't really put her heating on it was too expensive, this alerted the Welfare advisor who then quickly offered support via the Energy Savings Trust (EST).



Working with the EST she swapped her energy supplier and saved £60 a month. In addition, as a result of a benefit check her claim was reviewed resulting in an increase in payments and a reduction on her Council Tax.

The advisor also talked through the numerous ways in which Ms D could save money by simple changes to the home allowing her to become more energy efficient. The advisor also recognised that the customer very rarely left her property, so Mrs D was put in touch with a local community group near to where she lives.

Ms D could not thank the advisor enough for all the advice, help and support and more than anything else she said 'I wasn't just a number, someone out there really cares about me'.

Measuring effectiveness and refining our approach

The diverse range of organisations that make up our fuel poverty referral network allows us to provide tailored support to different customer segments. It also allows us to measure the impact of different approaches and partnerships to ensure that we are investing in the services with the highest impact.

Over the next 12 months, we will be measuring the effectiveness of each approach and partner, to allow us to refine the model and, make longer-term investment decisions.

Using fuel poverty data to influence network investment decisions

The Energy Saving Trust report highlights the importance of using fuel poverty data to drive investment decisions.

We have previously discussed where it might be more cost-effective, and beneficial overall, to improve the energy efficiency of homes, rather than spend the money on upgrading the local substation. This has been described through our project Power Saver Challenge.

We continue to look at ways to support fuel poor homes in our Ofgem network innovation bids, as it is recognised that those in the poorest homes are least likely to benefit from low carbon technologies. We are continuing our dialogue with Ofgem to address technical concerns for funding of our Power Saver Plus project to support customers in this area.

Through our Value of Lost Load research, (more detail on Part Two) we have also developed a better understanding of power cuts on our vulnerable customers and how much they value their electricity supply.

We are currently developing vulnerability maps where we are overlaying Electricity North West's network performance and PSR data with Energy Saving Trust's fuel poverty research, Value of Lost Load data and socio-demographic data sets to ensure future investment decisions are informed by social drivers.

The analysis will strengthen our understanding of the nature, scale and distribution of vulnerability across our network. We will be using this analysis to inform our network investment programmes.

Working at a national level to enhance the role of electricity distributors in alleviating fuel poverty

By 2030, the Government intends to have all fuel poor households living in dwellings with an energy performance rating of C or above – a challenging target.

We acted on the recommendation of the Energy Saving Trust report to make the case to Government, Ofgem, the Energy Systems Catapult, energy suppliers, local authorities and other network operators, that electricity distributors should play an enhanced role in improving energy efficiency standards.

This is supported by Ofgem's response to the Government's call for evidence. Ofgem petitioned the government and the regulator said ministers should examine "area-based solutions" involving local authorities and network companies. We'll continue to influence this debate.

We also extended our direct engagement with customers on energy efficiency issues. Building on the success of the 'Energy Persona Test' and the 'Big Energy Conversation' we're encouraging domestic customers to act on energy efficiency.

Fuel poverty data to be used in investment decisions

Stakeholders support an increased role for DNOs in customer energy efficiency

Improving frontline support for vulnerable customers

In last year's submission, we described the creation of a dedicated, six-strong welfare team, which is leading our efforts to identify and support vulnerable customers. This equates to an annual investment of £0.3m.

Over the past year, we have worked hard to enhance the team's skills and experience, improve leadership and expand the knowledge and confidence of our wider teams of customer call handlers and front line colleagues.

Progress includes:

Dedicated leadership: In 2017 we appointed Stephanie Trubshaw as Customer Director ensuring customer service is executive-led and at the heart of our strategic decision making. We also welcomed Christina Docherty to the team as our Customer Welfare and Partnerships Manager – a newly created role. Tina has a local authority welfare background, and is leading the roll-out of our new referral network, as well as forging new partnerships within our region, and organising training for our teams.

Scenario-based training: It's essential that colleagues are comfortable discussing customer problems so that they can help customers feel at ease. To achieve this, our welfare team has undergone scenario-based training with actors playing the role of customers. We are now in the process of rolling out the training to our 80-strong call centre, and will then make it available to frontline colleagues.

Joint working: Our welfare team now base themselves in operational depots at least once a week. This enhances understanding of vulnerability issues and support available by both operational teams and the welfare team which has allowed improvements in our operational response. This has also significantly enhanced our incident response for vulnerable customers.

A whole-company approach: Supporting vulnerable customers during major incidents requires the support of colleagues from every area of our business. Our commitment to proactively contact vulnerable customers before, during and after major weather events means that colleagues across the business support the Welfare Team to keep in touch.

Planned supply interruptions review: We've reviewed our approach to management of planned supply interruptions to better manage the impact on vulnerable customers. Our engineers now access our PSR dashboard and build PSR considerations into their plan. Contractors also access this information and tailor onsite support to customers' needs.

Dementia Friends training: In October 2017 each member of the Welfare Team attended an information session to become a Dementia Champion. This in turn allowed them to carry out training to the rest of the Contact Centre. We are looking to extend this training to frontline operational teams.

Our new Customer Support Hub: Working with our Reliability Advisory Panel, we have been developing our new "Customer Support Hub". The new Hub enables us to place welfare staff on site in a safe environment, with an offer of updated information, support and guidance during a power cut.

Post incident reviews: Following an unplanned power outage in Cockermouth, Cumbria, we teamed up with Age UK for a post incident drop-in session with local residents. We spent the day signing up customers to the PSR, and advising them of the support we can provide.

“Thank you Electricity North West for the help you gave me when I had no electricity

It was really refreshing and helpful to see and speak to someone face to face and rather than over the telephone

Thank you so much for all your help today, it made a real difference to my mum as she was so scared on her own

Feedback from a customer”



“On the streets during ‘The Beast from the East’

Our welfare team was out and about to support vulnerable customers during the snow and freezing temperatures in March 2018. Team member Lynn Perkins describes her experiences:

“When I first pulled up outside a customer's house, got out of my car, put my personal protective equipment on, the customer was at the side of my car within minutes asking what was going on. I gave the latest update that I had and she explained she was a young mum with five children. I handed out some welfare stock; blankets, flasks of hot water and torches, which she was very grateful for. Shortly after another young mum came out and I handed her the same and she was also very grateful, which felt very satisfying and helpful.

“These visits felt like you were giving more of a personal service to which was very heartfelt and gave you a huge sense of pride for providing the service. They were also very happy to see someone to explain the situation and help out”



Toni Byrne, Jane Cottam and Lynn Perkins our Customer Welfare Advisors preparing support packs in readiness for the 'Beast from the East'

Enhancing our communication channels

We have enhanced key communication platforms over the past 12 months, to make them more user friendly for vulnerable customers, in response to feedback from stakeholders.

Enhancements include:

Maintaining and improving our customer communications during a fault:

We proactively inform PSR customers who experience a Planned Supply Interruption (PSI) or a fault through a reminder service for PSIs and regular updates during an unplanned event.

This year, we have proactively contacted over 66,000 Priority Service Registered customers affected by a loss of supply. This has resulted in more than 130,000 separate instances of communications being carried out.

Our telephone system prioritises our PSR customers and channels them through to our newly-appointed welfare team. We have experienced an uplift of over 11,500 inbound calls regarding a loss of supply. We successfully answered 99.65% of these first time.

Our proactive customer satisfaction scores for PSR customers, where we successfully contacted the customers we are aware of before the fault has occurred, has delivered a fantastic result of 89%. This is 4.5% higher than our overall business CSAT (84.9%).

Videos with sign language: we have added sign language to a number of our key videos including 'What to do in a power cut' and 'Priority Services Register' and now ensure all videos carry subtitles, as a minimum.

An accessible website: Our website has undergone significant improvements in the past 12 months, to make it more accessible to customers with disabilities. Improvements have been made in consultation with the Royal National Institute for Blind People, and include a more prominent PSR section on the home page, and a simpler, streamlined sign up process.

Since the introduction of the new website we have had a 70% uptake on the PSR web form.

Overnight text alerts: Traditionally, we have shut down our text message service, alerting customers to a power outage, at 10pm, to avoid waking customers in the middle of the night.

We were approached by Angela Rayner MP, who told us about concerns of her constituents within the Droylsden area. The residents had been concerned by the lack of updates during a nighttime power outage. Concerns were amplified because the community was relatively isolated and had a predominantly elderly population.

We met with Angela Rayner to discuss these concerns, and as a result, have now revised our procedure, so that customers can opt-in to 24 hour text message alerts. Over 25k customers have benefited from this service change.

Introduction of inbound text communications: Customers can now text the Company to register a fault. This option is suggested where their preferred channel is SMS. We then use this to ask whether the customer has additional needs and, following the fault, to check that power has been successfully restored. We will offer this channel on more of our services next year.

Responding to different types of vulnerability with practical service improvements

We recognise that power outages – planned or unplanned – can have a significant impact on vulnerable customers, and can also create temporary vulnerability, where none existed before.

The importance of keeping our data up to date is essential and we have successfully updated 20,247 Priority Service customer contact details whilst reaching out directly to 190,000 customers.

Since our last submission, we have continued to use research to better understand the impact of power outages on different customer groups. Here are some examples of the changes that have been made.

Doing more to avoid school closures

Feedback from North Lancashire Citizens Advice following Storm Desmond highlighted the fact that a school closure, caused by a power outage, can create instant, widespread vulnerability. In response, all planned work is agreed with the school and timed to minimise the impact. We also agree how generators will be deployed to maintain power during a fault and repairs will only be affected when agreed with the school.

Improving network resilience for hospitals and other vulnerability 'hot spots'

There are 56 hospitals connected to our high voltage network, while on our low voltage network, we have identified 87 substations which provide power to 50 or more vulnerable customers.

Through the use of both remote control and automation equipment, all of these sites have now been brought up to the required level of resilience, reducing the risk of prolonged supply outages.

A new planned supply interruptions manual

We've provided training to ensure that vulnerable customers' needs are considered first when planning a supply interruption. We have created an updated procedure for planned supply interruptions, contained in a new manual, and briefed this out to colleagues across the network, including contact centre and front line operational teams.

The manual includes best practice on how we engage and support communities ahead of, and during, planned service interruptions.

Keeping home workers connected

With an increasing number of people working from home, a power outage can deprive these workers of phone and internet access – preventing them from doing their jobs. At the suggestion of our Reliability Advisory Panel, we have equipped our new incident van with mobile phone charging points and free wi fi to keep home workers connected during lengthy power outages.

More advanced notice for Small and Medium Enterprises

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are often the heart of a local community. A power outage often not only impacts them directly, but also the wider community that relies on them.

We carried out surveys among SMEs to better understand they support they need during planned power outages, and the amount of notice required.

The feedback highlighted the fact that insensitive planning by us can quickly create vulnerability. In response we have established a new, minimum notice period for SMEs of 40 days – a time period they told us would be adequate to allow them to make provisions and are developing a new database for SMEs, similar to the one we have for PSR customers.

Call quality: Every customer who contacts us is asked about the people in their home to identify whether there may be any unrecorded vulnerabilities. This increases our understanding of the incidence of vulnerability and also means that we can respond promptly and appropriately to customer needs.

Reducing winter outages: Customer research informs us that outages impact customers differently in winter. Cold, short, dark days increase anxiety and vulnerability. To address this we've adjusted our winter outage schedule and only plan outages between 9am and 4pm on Mondays to Thursday. No planned outages are permitted outside of these times.

Supporting essential services and small businesses

Using data as the foundation of our strategy

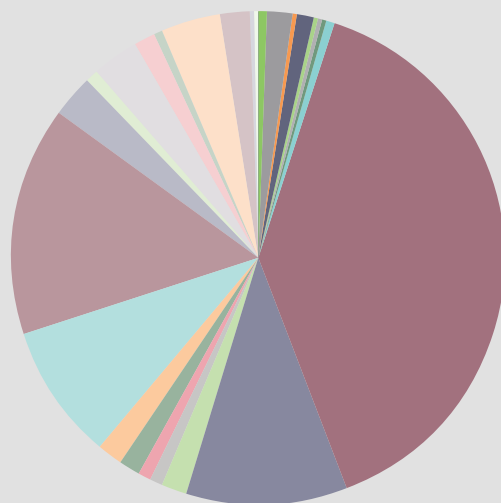
In our previous two stakeholder submissions, we referenced our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system – a sophisticated database containing details of customer interactions, vulnerable customers and the nature of their vulnerability.

Following the change of Needs Codes in 2017 and our proactive targeted campaigns, we have seen a significant increase in the percentage requirement for registration on the PSR of over 2000% for the following categories:-

- Temporary – Young adults,
- Temporary Life changes,
- Mental health and
- Chronic serious illness.

We continue to use the detailed data of the various customer needs codes to understand the strategy for our partnership development. For example this year, we have seen significant increases in the volume of customers associated to physical impairment and restricted movement, both of these categories increased by over 30k each. In response we have developed a partnership with the Stroke Association to deliver mobility awareness events for our colleagues.

We have used our existing experience and mental health partnerships to assist us in addressing the mental health requirements which are now emerging and, informed by the data, are seeking partnerships to understand the temporary vulnerability of young adults and of vulnerability associated with life changes.



	FY16/17	FY17/18	Difference	%
34 Temporary - Young adult householder	4	146	142	3550%
30 Mental Health	161	5778	5,617	3489%
22 Chronic/serious illness	783	19050	18,267	2333%
32 Temporary - Life changes	14	298	284	2029%
28 Restricted hand movement	71	1200	1,129	1590%
31 Additional presence preferred	17	228	211	1241%
23 MDE Electric Showering	34	324	290	853%
26 Oxygen Use	36	308	272	756%
29 Families with young children 5 or under	1891	13706	11,815	625%
25 Medicine refrigeration	386	2650	2,264	587%
24 Careline/telecare system	138	905	767	556%
33 Temporary - Post hospital recovery	73	376	303	415%
03 Dialysis; feeding pump and automated medication	2182	4919	2,737	125%
27 Poor sense of smell	155	325	170	110%
02 Heart; lung & Ventilator	2561	4919	2,358	92%
14 Pensionable Age	230845	417,235	186,390	81%
15 Physical Impairment	70742	112,538	41,796	59%

	FY16/17	FY17/18	Difference	%
20 Dementia(s)	10887	17181	6,294	58%
01 Nebuliser and Apnoea monitor	4735	7444	2,709	57%
12 Stair Lift; Hoist; Electric bed	5984	9236	3,252	54%
18 Developmental Condition	10031	15305	5,274	53%
10 Hearing/Speech Difficulties (inc. Deaf)	12160	18,361	6,201	51%
19 Unable to answer door / Restricted Movement	62896	94,502	31,606	50%
21 Other	108871	160,049	51,178	47%
09 Partial sighted	19005	26,742	7,737	41%
17 Unable to communicate in English	6525	8929	2,404	37%
11 Hearing Impaired	26505	34,547	8,042	30%
08 Blind	10793	13826	3,033	28%
16 Speech Difficulties	3844	4871	1,027	27%
07 Other Medical dependency on electricity	33103	41,885	8,782	27%
05 Ventilator	1011	1270	259	26%
04 Oxygen Concentrator	16705	20,739	4,034	24%
06 Apnoea monitor	1491	1818	327	22%
13 Bath Hoist	1723	2074	351	20%

Our vulnerability dashboard: a data-driven approach to vulnerable customer support

Over the past 12 months, we have added a further, vital layer of functionality to the CRM – a real-time vulnerability dashboard which informs decisions made throughout the operational business. This investment of £70k allows relevant employees to access helpful information for planning, without sharing sensitive data to protect consumer privacy.

This instant dashboard allows us to:

- Provide an appropriate level of assistance during a power cut – such as dispatching an on-site team of welfare officers, providing a generator to keep homes on supply during repair or maintenance work, dispatching a food van or making outbound phone calls to vulnerable customers. Accommodation can also be provided when necessary.
- Ensure that planned work takes account of levels of vulnerability in a neighbourhood. Projects are planned according to the needs of local people, not just the needs of the network. Operational teams are now required to use the vulnerability dashboard when planning jobs – an important cultural change for us – and build appropriate community support into each project plan.

The dashboard went live in December 2017, in time for the peak winter season, and is proving an invaluable tool. This year (2018) we will be adding further functionality, and making it more visual.



Securing supplies for vulnerable customers through our enhanced generator policy

Last year, we described our updated generator policy which demonstrates how consideration of vulnerable customers is embedded in our organisation. Using our new vulnerability dashboard, design engineers will consider the impact of a PSI on different customer groups. The following criteria is applied:-

	Spring, summer, autumn or seasonal temperature > 5°C		Winter or seasonal temperature < 5°C		Extreme weather < 2°C
	Duration < 5 hours	Duration > 5 hours	Duration < 4 hours	Duration > 4 < 7.5 hours	
More than 10% of customer subject to PSI are Highly Vulnerable*	Allow PSI	Use generator or individual generators for specific customers	Allow PSI	Use generator or individual generators for specific customers	Use generator
More than 20% of customers subject to PSI are Vulnerable classified as High & Medium inclusive	Allow PSI	Use generator or individual generators for specific customers	Allow PSI	Use generator or individual generators for specific customers	Use generator
If 40% of the interruptions are pensionable age	Allow PSI	Allow PSI	Allow PSI	Use generator	Use generator

The temperatures should be based on a daily average for the time of year at planning or in relation to any weather forecasts within the 6 week plan

Priority Service Register: growing our database

Over the past 12 months, we have added more than 180,000 customers to our Priority Services Register (PSR) – bringing the total to more than 603,000. The improvement in our data quality through the year has also seen the removal of over 7,700 customers through reaching out to update our customer contacts.

There has been a significant increase in the number of customers registering with transient vulnerabilities more than 5,000. Throughout the year the business has spent an additional £300k to promote who we are, what we do and how to contact us.

We need to continue raising our profile and evolve the relationships with customers. We need to move from a 'behind the scenes' infrastructure provider to a recognised authority on energy issues, with a strong consumer voice.

Activity behind this significant increase includes:

A wide-ranging promotional campaign to target hard-to-reach customers has included:

Working with local authorities: to distribute 50,000 leaflets promoting our PSR, this has allowed us to share a greater understanding of our service offer, LA staff are able to verbally promote across all the departments. The leaflets are also available in Braille, again to extend inclusion.

Partnering with local pharmacies: to promote PSR information on pharmacy bags in areas of high vulnerability. We lead this scheme, and invited North West water company United Utilities to join us. We have surveyed the local pharmacies and 96% of respondents were impressed by the level of support offered and 70% of respondents would tell vulnerable customers about the support they get with the PSR.

Working with local Co-operative stores: to promote our PSR services on their local community notice boards. Plus the staff in the stores now have a greater understanding of our offer and will promote to customers.

Advertising in All Together Now: This health and disability news magazine is distributed throughout the North West with the help of NHS Trusts, local authorities and community groups. 110,000 free copies are distributed across Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales.

Independent research: Each year we contact more than 5,000 customers to understand the service we provide. One of these surveys focuses on our vulnerable customers and the service we provide to them as a PSR customer. This information is then shared with our stakeholder panel to inform the development of new services.

We ask all surveyed customers if they are aware of our PSR and whether they would like to be added. Through this process, we have received an additional 972 customers to be new members of the scheme this year.

Renewing our PSR database: In 2017/18, we wrote to 84,145 PSR customers with whom we had had no contact for at least 12 months. We had 11,025 responses and around 941 respondents told us they were no longer vulnerable and could be removed from the PSR. The exercise helped to ensure our database is up to date, and highlighted the fact that vulnerability is often transitory.

We hold records for 24,130 PSR customers who don't have telephone number but who do have a valid email addresses. We initiated a MailChimp campaign to email these customers with an explanation of who we are, what we do and included a link to our website and web form. This enabled our PSR customers to directly update their details.

So far, 9,191(38%) customers opened the webform for updating their details and 2,786 (11.5%) customers linked into the supporting information pages.

Awareness campaign: Throughout the winter of 2017/18 we have used social media, TV and radio advertising to raise awareness of who we are and how we can support customers. The campaign resulted in a 25% increase in customer awareness, a 28% increase in customer trust and a 15% increase in customer confidence regarding who to contact in a power cut.

More than 180,000 customers added to our PSR - bringing the total to more than 603,000

Proactive contact helped us remove more than 7,700 customers who no longer needed PSR support

More than 5,000 customers registered with transient vulnerabilities

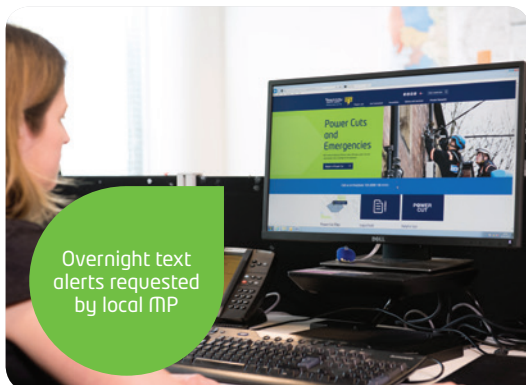
96% of pharmacies impressed with level of support offered

Managing our welfare services and Priority Service Register

Services tailored to our customers' needs

Knowing who our customers are and what vulnerability type they fall into is important to ensure that we provide the most effective support. Using PSR data, we're able to identify particular needs' groups and develop tailored services for these groups. This informs our partnership approach and delivers tangible outputs and positive outcomes for these customers.

PSR category	Number of customer registered in Electricity North West area 2017/18	% of overall Electricity North West population 2017/18	Increase of PSR customers registered	PSR registered number of customer changes during 2017/18	Number of registered vulnerabilities national average	Specific services available	Additional activities
Hearing/speech difficulties (inc. Deaf)	57779	1.07%	0.28%	5.35%	1,080,000	Social media, register your fault webform, text updates, minicom, face to face visits	RNIB partnership to develop our website Introduction of sign language for videos on web Commencement with Chatbot Next of kin contacts
Pensionable age	417235	7.73%	3.45%	43.65%	955,800	Winter planned supply interruption times Hotel accommodation Hot meals	Winter rules for PSI Next of kin customer journey communication
Unable to answer door + restricted movement & physical impairment	219040	4.06%	1.58%	28.97%	756,000	Next of kin contact service Door step service Password service Hotel accommodation Hot meals	Mobility awareness events - Stroke Association collaboration Introduction of door step visit Next of kin contacts
Mental health, including dementia and developmental conditions	38264	0.71%	0.32%	8.86%	432,000	Emotional Support during a power loss Hotel accommodation Hot meals	Additional Training for contact centre agents to support with Alzheimers, Samaritans, Mind Trained Dementia Friends Nominated contacts
Oxygen concentrator	21047	0.39%	0.08%	5.57%	378,000	Air liquide	Nominated contacts
Families with young children 5 or under	13706	0.25%	0.22%	4.23%	324,000	Regular additional communication Hotel accommodation Hot meals	Update of all literature and website to reach out Embedded the change within the business Actively include in the contact centre script to promote
Unable to communicate in English	8929	0.17%	0.04%	8.27%	108,000	Big word translation contract in place, use of mobile apps to translate on the door step	Refreshers across the business Nominated contacts 7 language conversions on website
All of the above are included within the standard offering - password service, winter and storm warning texts, generation for PSI's based on our policy and where needed a door step visit from ENWL.							



Next steps

We're committed to continuous improvement of the activities we undertake to deliver our Customer Vulnerability Strategy. Our activities must always deliver impactful outcomes that deliver value to and measurable benefits for our customers. Developments to our strategy planned for next year include:

- Continue to develop and assess the effectiveness of our referral networks
- Continue to overlay our data to enhance our knowledge of the community we serve and enhance our operational approach
- Invest in new ways to promote our PSR
- Host four Round Table Events with North West business to explore ways of better serving vulnerable customers
- Implement automated data cleansing process
- Team up with local authorities, Fire and Safety Services, Police Services and Community Groups on event days
- Launch the Customer Support Hub
- Provide new Fuel Poverty Training to colleagues
- Continue to lead data sharing activity for industry
- Develop new referral pathways with NHS, LA Child and Adult Services Departments, local housing suppliers and landlords
- Implement safeguarding strategy
- Investigate opportunities for Community Investment Funding.

Blank page



Electricity North West

304 Bridgewater Place,
Birchwood Park,
Warrington. WA3 6XG

www.enwl.co.uk



CRUSH_JB0418