



Stakeholder Engagement Submission 2019/20



SGN
Your gas. Our network.



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SGN management statement

This document fairly presents SGN's stakeholder engagement activities for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, which we are responsible for designing and implementing. The criteria used for making this assessment, we believe, are suitable for evaluating our reporting. This document:

- was prepared to appropriately describe our stakeholder engagement strategy, the way in which we keep stakeholders informed, how we enable timely input and feedback to inform decision-making and the variety of mechanisms we use to engage, tailored to stakeholder needs
- includes relevant details of changes to SGN's stakeholder engagement management activities in the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, and
- does not omit or distort information relevant to the scope of the stakeholder engagement management and activities being described.



John Morea, Chief Executive Officer

Welcome by John Morea, SGN Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Since the commencement of the RII0-GD1 price control period in 2013, I've been struck by how far we've come in our approach to stakeholder engagement. I'm proud to say we're a business which truly listens to our stakeholders, taking steps to ensure everyone has an opportunity to share with us their views about what matters to them. We've used the valuable insight gathered from our customers and stakeholders to shape our business, and now structure our activities to align with the customer and stakeholder-driven commitments that flow through this document:

- We will make a **positive impact** on society, by supporting vulnerable communities and providing excellent service.
- We will deliver a **safe and efficient** service by acting safely, keeping the gas flowing and keeping costs down.
- We will build a **shared net-zero future** by accelerating decarbonised energy solutions and minimising our environmental impact.

This year we asked PwC to undertake an independent gap analysis of our approach and activities against the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard, and I was delighted to see this demonstrated that we've raised our game and continued to make fantastic progress.



Looking ahead, we've now laid the groundwork to adopt a revised governance structure which will preserve our much-valued external Stakeholder Advisory Panel (SAP) and introduce a new Board Committee. These groups will ensure we continue to set high ambitions for our future stakeholder engagement and scrutinise how we are using insight to inform our decisions. I hope the examples in this submission illustrate the continued reliance and importance we place on valuable engagement with our stakeholders and customers.

Foreword by Jayne Scott, SGN Stakeholder Advisory Panel (SAP) Chair



As Chair of SGN's Stakeholder Advisory Panel (SAP) I am delighted to introduce this submission and reflect on the maturing relationship between the SAP and SGN where we operate as a "critical friend".

2019/20 has been a transformational year in many ways, both for the SAP and the gas distribution sector, including SGN. It

has included the setting of UK and Scottish Government targets into law on net zero carbon emissions, the development of long-term projects in partnership with other stakeholders to address the social impact of the decarbonisation of heat as well as submission of the final business plan for GD2 and the independent report from the Customer Engagement Group (CEG). All these developments will have long-term impacts on the business. I am pleased to report that throughout these developments, the company has engaged directly with the SAP and has listened carefully to feedback to ensure that responses to all these issues have been fully underpinned by high quality consumer and stakeholder engagement.

The SAP has also grown in maturity this year with a stable membership and no changes to its Terms of Reference. It has continued to focus on how it can work with SGN to extend its stakeholder reach, continuously improve engagement with stakeholders and to suggest improvement opportunities. The SAP has continued to engage positively with SGN's Executive team, and have witnessed good Executive team attendance at SAP meetings and positive responses to challenges and suggestions from the SAP.

Highlights of the role of the SAP this year have included:

- ✓ Reviewing the changes to the six principles of stakeholder engagement.
- ✓ Assessing the updated stakeholder mapping exercise and challenging the priorities for further development, to improve business as usual activity and the transition to GD2, through the strategic engagement mapping exercise.
- ✓ Collaborating on the development of the partnership with Scope, which has successfully improved engagement with customers with disabilities.
- ✓ Participation in specialist panels and workshops influencing the development of the company's pathway to net zero carbon emissions and social value.
- ✓ Considering the role of social value as a practical tool to evaluate new initiatives while responding to the challenges raised by the Ofgem panel last year.
- ✓ Testing the robustness of stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the roll out of major projects to address the social impact of heat decarbonisation, including the Greener Kirkcaldy and H100 projects detailed later in the submission.

Overall, the SAP considers excellent progress has been made by SGN to mature and mainstream its stakeholder engagement and establish stakeholders and customers as a central part of all business decision-making. This will be further evidenced by the establishment of the new Board Committee, which should ensure stakeholder and customer interests, based on high quality engagement is at the centre of Board decision-making. We look forward to continuing to support that journey.

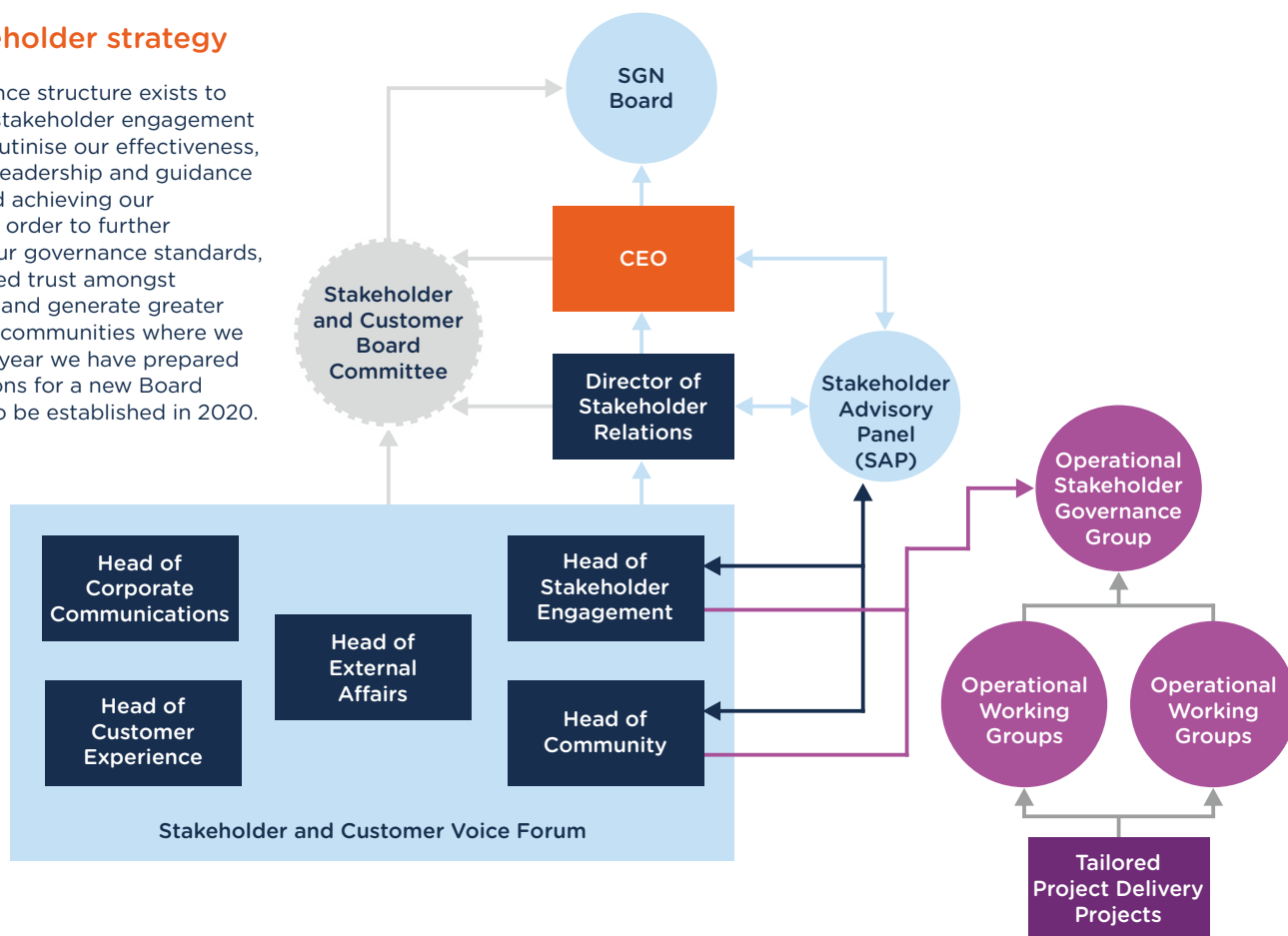
Ofgem's SEI criteria:

The network company has a comprehensive and up-to-date stakeholder engagement strategy, which sets out:

- how the network company keeps stakeholders informed about relevant issues, business activities, decision-making and other developments, and
- how the network company enables timely input and feedback from stakeholders via appropriate mechanisms to inform decision-making

Our stakeholder strategy

Our governance structure exists to oversee our stakeholder engagement activities, scrutinise our effectiveness, and provide leadership and guidance in setting and achieving our objectives. In order to further strengthen our governance standards, build increased trust amongst stakeholders and generate greater value for the communities where we operate, this year we have prepared the foundations for a new Board Committee to be established in 2020.



Key governance groups

Stakeholder Advisory Panel (SAP): An independent group working collaboratively with SGN to provide advice, support and challenge on a range of issues which may be of interest to all stakeholders including customers and facilitate best practice in stakeholder engagement to help deliver better business and stakeholder outcomes.

Stakeholder and Customer Voice Forum: An internal group comprising senior managers across the stakeholder relations directorate who oversee performance against KPIs and progress against targets, reporting to the Board Committee.

Operational Stakeholder Governance Group: Ensures that approved initiatives which will benefit customers and stakeholders are effectively adopted by the operations directorate and embedded within the business.

Operational Working Groups: Consisting of key individuals from both operations and stakeholder engagement, these groups examine how best to implement initiatives and solutions within our operational workstreams at a local level, by utilising insights, sharing best practice and guidance, and raising and resolving issues.

***Proposed new group* Stakeholder and Customer Board Committee:** Led by a Non-executive director, this group will support the Board in ensuring we have due regard for customer and stakeholder interests and our impact on the broader community and environment in our principle decision-making at Board level.

Our governance arrangements enable our CEO John Morea to continue to play a key role in leading and influencing our engagement. John is actively involved in our engagement activities; ranging from regularly attending our stakeholder engagement workshops to give stakeholders an opportunity to engage with him directly, through to undertaking site visits with Scope and disabled customers to better understand the challenges our streetworks can pose to those with impairments such as reduced mobility or sight loss.

We have **nine** quantitative and **five** qualitative key progress indicators which the Stakeholder and Customer Voice Forum manage to monitor our performance. In addition, increasing stakeholder satisfaction is a criterion in the long-term incentive plan for our senior managers, creating a clear link to our overall organisational objectives and executive and senior management bonuses.

The SAP has continued to play an influential role, acting as a critical friend in shaping our approach to engagement and reviewing our effectiveness. It comprises the following internal and external members:

Stakeholder advisory panel

Executive team members



John Morea
CEO



Andrew Quail
Director of IT
and Innovation



Glenn Norman
Director of Operations
(Southern)



Paul Denniff
Network and
Safety Director



Helen Bray
Director of
Stakeholder Relations



John Lobban
Managing Director, Scotland
and Northern Ireland

External members



Jayne Scott
Chair



Ollie Pendered
Community Energy South



Christine Tate
Partnerships
for Good



Richard Lowes
Exeter University



Matt Copeland
National Energy Action



Matthew Pencharz
MSP Strategies

We strive for continuous improvement in our approach to stakeholder engagement. This year, working with our SAP we have refined our **six principles** of stakeholder engagement, and included a statement affirming our commitment to the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard in our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. These longstanding **six principles** guide our approach to stakeholder engagement and are detailed below. The enhancements to these principles that we've introduced this year are identified in **bold**.

1. Delivering measurable benefits:

We will engage directly with customers and stakeholders to embed their interests in our decision-making and deliver valued, measurable benefits.

2. Focusing on material issues:

Customers and stakeholders should have a say in **relevant** issues they care about and that will have the most impact on them, **both now and in the future**.

3. Driving inclusivity and diversity:

Engagement with customers and stakeholders should be broad and inclusive; we will seek out the diverse perspectives of challenging and hard to reach groups **and ensure complex issues are communicated in a way that is easily accessible and understandable to all**.

4. Providing ongoing opportunities for challenge and collaboration:

Engagement will be tailored to the needs of stakeholders to ensure genuine opportunities for ongoing dialogue, mutual education, challenge, review and collaboration are created.

5. Being responsive and transparent:

SGN will be responsive and transparent, explaining how the views and priorities of stakeholders have influenced decision-making and how we have balanced the needs of different stakeholders.

6. Continually improving:

SGN will continuously improve and develop its engagement with customers and stakeholders, finding new and **more innovative approaches** to respond to their changing needs.

Our six-stage engagement cycle

Our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy details the six, iterative stages of our engagement cycle we use to embed the above principles of stakeholder engagement across our organisation. These are as follows:

1. For each of our key business priorities and processes we **identify** the stakeholders that are impacted by or interested in our activities
2. We **tailor** our methods of engagement and communication to our stakeholders' needs depending on their preferences and levels of knowledge and interest
3. We engage with a **purpose** and **listen** to our stakeholders
4. We **respond** to the views of stakeholders across our business
5. We measure the **benefits** of our engagement and its **effectiveness**
6. We review and **refine** our strategy and engagement plans to ensure shareholder views are incorporated



Ofgem's SEI criteria:

A broad and inclusive range of stakeholders has been engaged

Identifying and mapping our stakeholders

Our digital Stakeholder Relationship Management (SRM) tool allows us to capture and analyse our engagement activities with a diverse range of stakeholders across our business. We use SRM to maintain records of which topics each stakeholder has told us are priorities or of interest to them, the geographical areas in which they operate and their communication preferences.

This year we have worked with our SAP to adapt our stakeholder mapping, categorising all our stakeholders into one of 12 main groups. These are as follows:

Stakeholder groups

Domestic Customers Domestic customers Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Future gas customers	Scottish Central & Local Government Scottish Government Local authorities (Scotland) LEPs	Energy Partners GDNs DNOs Shippers / Suppliers Renewable energy sector Local Area Energy Plan partners (LAEPs)	Environmental Experts & Advocacy Groups NGOs Environmental charities Sustainability specialists
Industrial & Commercial Customers Industrial and Commercial (I&C) users Very large gas customers	Regulatory Bodies Ofgem HSE Environment Agency SEPA	Key Partners in End-to-End Supply Chain Appliance manufacturers Construction & engineering companies Service providers / contractors / consultants	Consumer Welfare Advocacy Groups / Providers Consumer groups (CA, CAS, etc) Charities - vulnerability Charities - energy/fuel poverty Charities - health & safety Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) Private and Community Interest Companies
UK Central & Local Government BEIS Government departments Local authorities (Southern) Politicians LEPs	Local Interests Community groups Emergency & health services Highways agencies Public transport providers Housing providers	Internal Stakeholders Employees / Trade unions Shareholders / investors	Industry Peers Industry groups / institutions Research partners / academics iGTs / UIPs Other utilities (water, comms, etc)

Using data from SRM and taking the learning from engaging with our stakeholders we have broadly classified which of our **three** commitments (positive impact, shared future, safe and efficient) are likely to be of most interest to each of these groups. This builds on the feedback from our previous workshops and surveys, where stakeholders have indicated the topics they would like to be informed about, consulted on, actively involved in, or were not relevant to them. We also ask stakeholders which areas they consider to be most important in our satisfaction surveys and stakeholders are able to self-select which priorities they're most interested in when responding to mailouts from SRM.

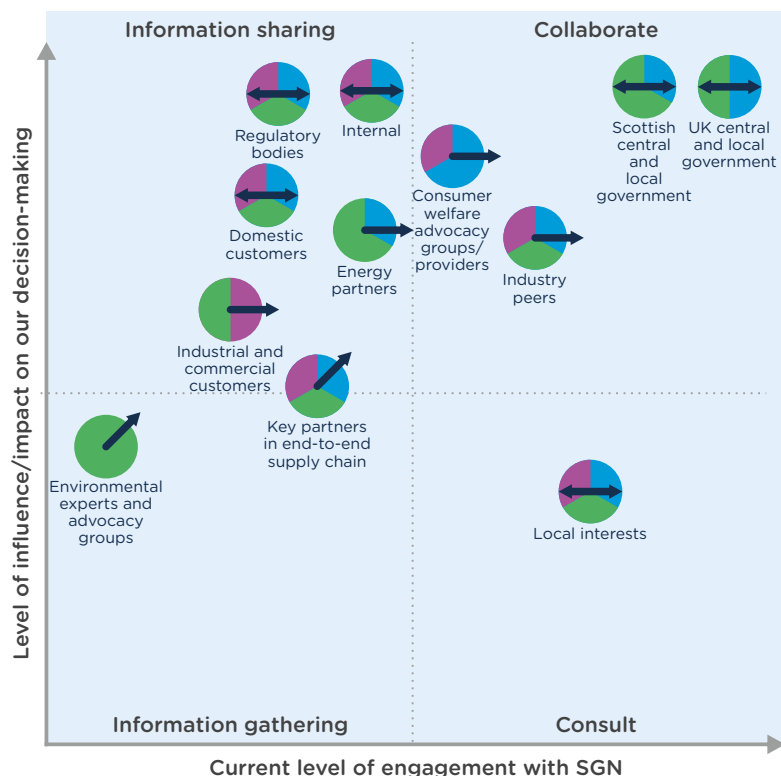
	Expect to be asked to actively engage - very relevant and would like to influence plans	Keep me informed - relevant	No need to be kept informed - not relevant
Making a positive impact			
Community involvement and social responsibilities	29%	45%	26%
Delivering excellent customer experience	19%	49%	31%
Gas connections	19%	48%	32%
Building a shared future			
Future energy solutions	41%	39%	20%
Using innovation for efficiency	35%	40%	25%
Minimising environmental impact	33%	47%	19%
Delivering a safe and efficient service			
Planned disruptions	35%	43%	22%
Delivering a safe and reliable service	19%	52%	29%
Investment plans and priorities	27%	40%	33%
Keeping costs down	9%	51%	41%

When stakeholders on a specific topic aren't known to us, we follow the below steps to identify who we need to engage with:

1. Ask the relevant business area for their existing stakeholder relationships.
2. Undertake desk research to determine which stakeholders are key influencers in this area.
3. Reach out to trusted stakeholders for advice and join relevant engagement activities others are running to build key relationships.
4. Engage expert third-party assistance to identify relevant stakeholders on our behalf.

We ran an internal survey which demonstrated that **86%** of our operational and department leads were helped to identify their stakeholders by our geographically aligned and strategic stakeholder managers, an improvement of **15%** from 2018.

Strategic engagement mapping 2019/20

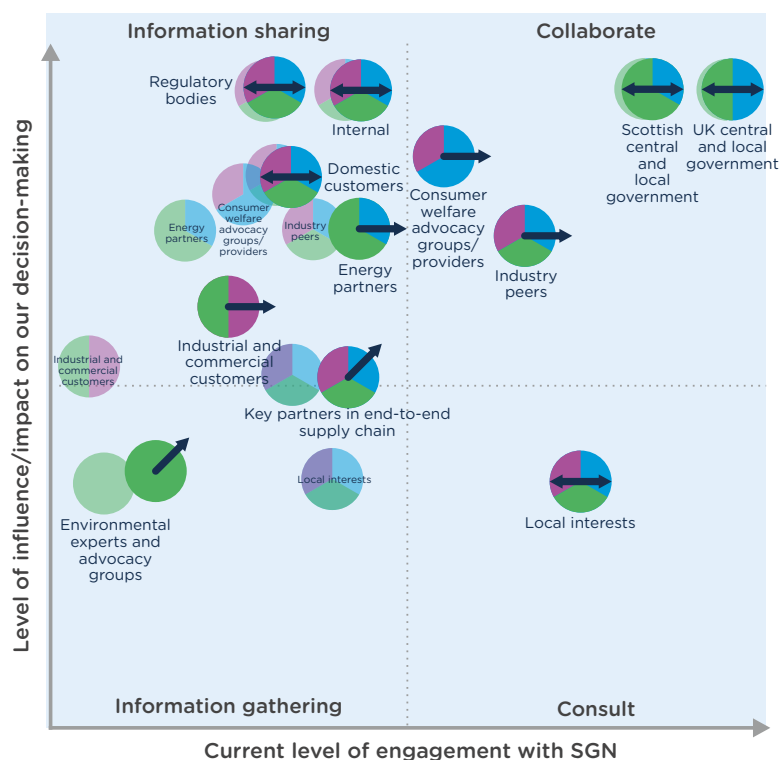


As well as maintaining an overall count, our SRM tool scores the engagements we have with our stakeholders to reflect the depth and quality of each exchange. For example, attendance at a workshop we've hosted receives a higher score than responding to an email. Using this information, we have been able to aggregate, quantify and reflect the amount of engagement we've had with each stakeholder group in our mapping matrix. This is shown in the adjacent image on the X axis, with the level of influence each stakeholder group has over the decisions we make identified by their position on the Y axis.

Key

- Positive impact
- Safe and efficient
- Shared future
- Maintain position
- Desired direction of travel

Strategic engagement mapping 2018/19 vs 2019/20



The arrows shown on our mapping matrix identify the desired direction of travel we aim to move each stakeholder group in based on undertaking our programme of strategic annual engagement. Having now embedded SRM in our business for over two years, we are able to produce a trace that identifies where each group were positioned on this matrix in 2018/19 in comparison to this year.

Key

- 2019/20
- 2018/19
- Positive impact
- Safe and efficient
- Shared future
- Maintain position
- Desired direction of travel

Overall, we have extended our reach by expanding the number of stakeholders in our SRM database to **8,605**, up from 3,395 at the end of 2018/19. This increase is as a result of:

- importing higher numbers of political stakeholders into our SRM tool,
- the greater volumes of engagement undertaken across our business, and
- increased use of our SRM tool following a programme of internal refresher training.

Twenty-two per cent of our stakeholders are classed as either 'engaged' or 'highly engaged', and a further **55%** are rated as 'connected'. Using our **tailored project delivery** process, we map stakeholders impacted by our planned works and engage with these individuals during the planning and execution of projects. Last year we made **119** changes to our projects based on stakeholder feedback, and the quality of our up-front engagement avoided the need to make changes once a project had commenced on many occasions.



We have introduced **depot blueprints** to enhance the way in which we engage with stakeholders at a local level and ensure that depot business planning is informed by local stakeholder perspectives. The blueprints assist us in developing enduring relationships with the local communities and stakeholders in the areas where we operate, and understand and respond to their unique priorities and needs.

Engaging with those who are harder-to-reach

We design our engagement and research to ensure we get the perspective of customers from whom we seldom hear. This can include some vulnerable customers, people for whom English is not a first language and the elderly.

This year we have been working with Scope to better understand the views of customers with disabilities by hearing directly from these individuals on a disability panel and during site visits. This has provided new and valuable insight, driving activities we describe in Part Two of this submission.

When undertaking customer research, we follow industry best practice and use intermediaries undertaking face-to-face interviews to ensure we hear from those customers who are harder to reach. Our willingness to pay study undertaken in 2019 allowed us to review results across **54** customer sub-segments, a proportion of whom represented vulnerable and/or hard-to-reach demographic groups. A few examples included customers aged over 80, customers with difficulties communicating and customers for whom English was not a first language.

We have continued to work with London Sustainability Exchange (LSx), now known as Global Action Plan, to utilise its specialist expertise in engaging with groups that are harder for us to reach. The aim of this specific project was to further extend our reach on willingness to pay research we were undertaking to include:

1. People who don't speak English → Elays Network (Arabic, Somali & Eritrean)
2. People with mental health conditions → Bipolar Scotland
3. People with health conditions/carers of people with health conditions → Involve

We have improved accessibility on our website, including for non-English speakers, with the introduction of the Recite Me tool, which helps all customers use our website more easily to access the information they need, including translation. Our engineers in the field have access to a 'customer toolkit' via an app. This year we've introduced **Language Line** into this kit, which provides access to translators so we can communicate with non-English speakers.

Ofgem's SEI criteria:

The network company has used a variety of appropriate mechanisms to inform and engage with their stakeholders – these have been tailored to meet the needs of various stakeholder groups, and are fit for purpose in allowing a detailed analysis of a breadth of stakeholder perspectives

Tailoring our approach to stakeholder engagement

Our extensive experience of undertaking stakeholder engagement has allowed us to evaluate the effectiveness of our approaches, and subsequently improve our ability to deploy the right mechanisms to hear from our stakeholders and customers.

When we identify an engagement or research need, we use a decision support tool to identify the strengths and limitations of different engagement mechanisms at a glance. This helps us

tailor our approach to engaging stakeholders based on considerations such as the complexity of the information to be discussed, the number of stakeholders we can reach, cost, and ease with which stakeholders can share their views. In addition, we retain records of stakeholders' communication preferences in SRM.

We know that different stakeholders have different levels of knowledge and interest in our business and in the topics on which

we are engaging. In 2019/20 we have undertaken a number of topic-driven engagements in addition to broader engagement activities relevant to all stakeholders. The table overleaf demonstrates how we have utilised different engagement methods to tailor our approach as is appropriate to different specific needs.

Engagement mechanism and stakeholder groups	Purpose and rationale	Tailoring our approach and how this was effective
<p>Stakeholder Advisory Panel (SAP) meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The SAP members' breadth of expertise allows them to represent the interests of a number of specific stakeholder groups, such as domestic customers, local government, vulnerable customers and future energy considerations</i> 	<p>The SAP comprises a group of experts who are well-informed about our business and act as a critical friend.</p>	<p>Regular meetings are undertaken throughout the year, allowing the SAP members to provide direct input into the SGN Executive, offering challenge, guidance and feedback on our stakeholder engagement. In 2019/20, the SAP made 10 key recommendations to improve our engagement, all of which have either been completed or are on track to be completed in line with agreed timescales.</p>
<p>Specialist panels for expert and interested stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Consumer welfare advocacy groups and providers</i> <i>Industry peers</i> <i>Energy partners</i> <i>Environmental experts and advocacy groups</i> <i>Key partners in end-to-end supply chain</i> <i>Central and local government</i> 	<p>We engaged specialist stakeholders with subject-specific knowledge to discuss our activities and ambitions in relation to our three commitments. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive impact workshops – focusing on our support for vulnerable customers and our customer service track record. Safe & efficient workshop – seeking feedback on our processes relating to asset risk management and network planning Shared future workshop – to share and seek feedback on our pathway towards net zero emissions, and our level of ambition in relation to reducing our environmental impact and operating our business in a more sustainable manner. 	<p>Hosting direct face-to-face engagement in a workshop setting allowed stakeholders to share detailed, qualitative views and debate issues with other well-informed experts.</p> <p>100% of attendees across all workshops agreed with the statement <i>'Overall, I am satisfied with today's event'</i>, and that the workshops had enhanced their understanding of our activities.</p>
<p>Local depot events, community drop-in sessions and briefing presentations for interested stakeholders and customers (often in association with planned works in the local area)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Local interests</i> <i>Domestic customers</i> 	<p>This year we have held 10 depot events, 36 drop-in sessions, participated in 17 community engagement events and presented at 12 school assemblies.</p>	<p>Holding local events, attended by SGN staff in person, helps develop enduring relationships with the local communities and stakeholders in the areas where we operate. Feedback from these events has been positive, for example, on average our contributions were scored at 8/10 by schools participating in the Junior Citizen Child Safety event.</p>
<p>Distributed entry connections (biomethane) customer survey and workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Energy partners</i> <i>Key partners in end-to-end supply chain</i> 	<p>We ran an online feedback survey with this specific group of stakeholders.</p> <p>We subsequently held workshops in both our networks to provide these stakeholders with an opportunity to engage with the relevant business leads and teams from our organisation in person.</p>	<p>Many of these organisations have fewer resources and are geographically spread across the country. An online survey makes it easier for all these businesses to share their views with us.</p> <p>The survey showed that when asked to take everything into account, customer satisfaction scored 7.8/10.</p> <p>The workshops provided an opportunity for these stakeholders to engage in person with the relevant people within SGN. Responses to the overall satisfaction of attendees at both our southern and Scotland workshops was 100%. 92% of attendees agreed the format was appropriate and allowed them to have their say.</p>
<p>Roundtable meetings on specialist topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Consumer welfare advocacy groups and providers</i> <i>Industry peers</i> <i>Central and local government</i> 	<p>We hosted a social value cross-industry round table event to seek guidance from a range of expert stakeholders on this (sometimes complex) topic.</p> <p>We held Carbon Monoxide (CO) forums with expert stakeholders in both Scotland and southern.</p>	<p>These workshops brought stakeholders with similar levels of subject-matter knowledge together to share learning and best practice.</p> <p>An expert stakeholder attending our cross-industry social value round table event remarked: <i>"SGN are one of the leaders in the Utilities sector to use this modelling and reporting and it would be good to see them share their learnings as this develops and becomes embedded in their organisation."</i></p> <p>A stakeholder at our CO round table remarked: <i>"SGN is always striving to innovate and take on new ideas, you listen to and follow-up suggestions from stakeholders. Even from fairly casual conversations you have explored the possibilities of an idea and created opportunities that often then develop into a collaborative approach. You have the nation's interests at heart, not just your patch."</i></p>

Engagement mechanism and stakeholder groups	Purpose and rationale	Tailoring our approach and how this was effective
<p>Research surveys with stakeholders and customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All stakeholder groups</i> • <i>I&C customers</i> • <i>Domestic customers</i> 	<p>Stakeholders We undertook a further wave of stakeholder satisfaction surveys, with 93 stakeholders responding.</p> <p>Customers We undertook willingness to pay research with 3,678 customers across a representative sample of different demographics.</p> <p>We supplemented our quantitative willingness to pay with a further round undertaken by LSx to ensure we heard from customers who are hard to reach.</p>	<p>Utilising these quantitative methods provides us with a greater depth of data, which can be analysed and compared to previous years. It is a comparatively easy way for stakeholders and customers to impart their views in response to defined questions.</p> <p>Willingness to pay results are triangulated against the measurable benefits of our social projects and interventions. This provides a reference for comparing the cost of delivering outcomes against what customers would be willing to pay.</p> <p>96% of online customer respondents did not find any questions difficult to answer, and 88% of face-to-face interviewees understood what to do during the choice-based exercise.</p>
<p>Surveys of specific stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Local government</i> • <i>Local interests</i> • <i>Industry peers</i> 	<p>We conducted a feedback survey of all local authorities covering our network areas. Operational leads in our Scottish Independent Undertakings (SIUs) completed semi-structured telephone surveys with interested local stakeholders to seek feedback on attitudes towards future gas demand and decarbonisation.</p> <p>We ran a survey of our Third-Party Connections customers. This was a follow-on from a survey conducted in 2018.</p>	<p>Local authorities are an important stakeholder group across most of our business activities. We have therefore sought to proactively engage in both bilateral meetings and more quantitatively via a survey.</p> <p>Establishing relationships with stakeholders in our SIUs helps us to understand and respond to the unique priorities and needs of these communities.</p> <p>The Third-Party Connections survey allows us to identify any significant changes in customers' attitudes towards the services we provide (see Part 2 for further detail).</p>
<p>Collaborative workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Scottish central and local government</i> • <i>Energy partners</i> • <i>Industry peers</i> • <i>Environmental experts and advocacy groups</i> • <i>Key partners in end-to-end supply chain</i> 	<p>Working with National Grid Transmission we collaborated in a workshop and webinar examining the role of hydrogen in the future of heat in Scotland.</p>	<p>These engagements recognised that there are Scotland-specific factors that we need to understand, account for and collaborate on when seeking to decarbonise energy supplies in Scotland.</p>
<p>Customer focus groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Domestic customers</i> 	<p>Acting on a recommendation of our SAP, we engaged with the pan-disability charity Scope and held a panel meeting to hear the experiences of customers with disabilities.</p> <p>We held nine focus groups with connections customers and four with customers who had experienced a recent mains replacement project.</p>	<p>These qualitative engagements ensure we hear the in-depth views of our customers first-hand.</p>
<p>Digital newsletters and online engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All stakeholders</i> 	<p>We issue digital newsletters as a minimum quarterly to stakeholders in our SRM database. We created 929 posts across our social media platforms on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn last year.</p>	<p>Our newsletters are issued in accordance with stakeholder's preferences, reflecting the topics they have opted-in to be kept informed about. Our newsletters have an average opening rate of 26%, exceeding the business-to-business benchmark rate of 18%.</p> <p>Cumulatively, our postings on social media received over 2.6m impressions, with Facebook achieving the highest engagement rate at 2.9%.</p>
<p>Internal feedback surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Internal stakeholders</i> 	<p>We ran an internal survey across 10 business departments to seek feedback on how well we are engaging our stakeholders and the changes and benefits brought by our stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>We ran a survey of 139 of our front-line emergency engineers to better understand the issues related to Carbon Monoxide (CO) they encounter when attending customers' properties.</p>	<p>Using the digital tools available to all colleagues helps disseminate learning and gather information quickly and easily with minimal disruption.</p>

Ofgem's SEI criteria:

The network company can demonstrate it is acting on input/feedback from stakeholders

Engaging with a purpose, listening and responding to our stakeholders

Our stakeholders play an instrumental role in shaping our activities. We engage our stakeholders to seek their views on the objectives of our initiatives and activities, update on and review our progress, and evaluate our success. Last year, we had **6,636** engagements with stakeholders and customers.

Identifying initiatives that are valued by stakeholders

As described in previous submissions, our maturity pipeline serves to illustrate how our stakeholder and social projects are tracked from the planning stages through to fully embedded new ways of working if successful outcomes are generated. For larger projects, this process can span multiple years before we can fully evaluate the outcomes and associated benefits.



We use a range of evaluation tools to assess our social projects. This allows us to produce a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether a new idea or initiative will bring value to our customers and stakeholders. As described in Part Two, we use a tool to calculate the social value of our projects. We use this tool proactively to ensure that proposed target outputs will achieve greater benefits than the costs. Additionally, we triangulate the quantified evaluations with other sources of insight such as stated preference customer research (willingness to pay) and stakeholder feedback.

In our initiative assessment process, proposed projects are measured against at least one or more of the following criteria:

- Reduction in cost or time and disruption to customers
- Reduced need for customers to contact us
- Reduced number of complaints
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Reduction in damage to our network
- Increased awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO)
- Reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions

We receive proposals and ideas from a variety of sources, including stakeholders and partners or when evaluating best practice we've seen demonstrated by others. This year, we undertook project initiative assessments on **17** proposals to assess whether they could be embedded within our business or replicated across the industry. A few examples of these initiative assessments are summarised in the table below:

Proposed initiative	Benefits score (must achieve at least 35/50 to pass)	Rationale for approval or rejection
Energy Skills Partnership	42 Approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects stakeholder feedback • Strategic fit with Environmental Action Plan and net zero target • Embeds hydrogen awareness within local communities • Promotes future employment opportunities and the importance of STEM subjects
Greener Kirkcaldy	40 Approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic fit with customers in vulnerable circumstances strategy • Demonstrates leadership position in championing the social impact of decarbonised energy • Addresses key barriers to acceptability of future heating technologies through education
Sustainability Supply Chain School	41 Approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pioneering initiative in the gas industry to upskill our supply chain and workforce in key areas of sustainability • Provides a clear leadership in the gas industry on engaging with the supply chain • Strategic fit with our Environmental Action Plan
Wildlife Trust	32 Rejected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale initiative and therefore did not meet desired reach/scale • Minimal measurable outcomes for stakeholders
Scope Talking Heads Videos	43 Approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to feedback from customer forum • Strategic fit with vulnerable circumstances strategy • Collaborating with established charity and DNO • Raises awareness of issues faced by customers in need of extra support

Acting on stakeholders' feedback

Making a positive impact

They said

We met Vicky Foxcroft MP, who brought to our attention feedback from a previous emergency incident in her constituency. Residents, some of whom were vulnerable, were evacuated by SGN following a major gas leak. The residents slept in the local library overnight, but some were unable to access medication they had left in the building. Vicky believed that we could improve by better-preparing accommodation and communication arrangements, for example, by providing overnight bags and warning residents to bring medication with them on their way out. Additionally, customers living in multi-occupancy buildings shared their experiences and views on our activities with us at dedicated focus groups.

We did

We created an **evacuation pack** and supporting process, which we trialled in **four** operational depots (**two** in Scotland and **two** in southern).

The evacuation pack consists of information 'postcards' our engineers give to customers during an evacuation. These provide guidance on the process and what items to ensure they take with them when leaving their property (including medication).

The evacuation pack also includes small SGN-branded essential overnight items such as a toothbrush, toothpaste, a flannel, and 50ml bottles of shampoo and shower gel.

Outcome

The evacuation packs are ready for customers from multiple occupancy buildings who may need additional support in the event of an evacuation. Stocks have now been supplied to all our main sites, ready for use across our business in the event of future emergency evacuations.

Delivering a safe and efficient service

They said

Customers and stakeholders want us to minimise disruption by limiting the amount of streetworks we undertake.

Both our internal post-completion reinstatement inspectors and local authorities identified a common defect was that bar holes were not being properly 'plugged' after reinstatement. Bar holes are small holes made in roads and footpaths when our engineers are investigating the most likely location of a gas escape. Correcting these defects requires a repeat visit to the site to remedy.

We did

The traditional reinstatement method is both lengthy to complete and not always effective on all widths of bar hole. Having researched potential options, we worked with a specialist supplier to trial an innovative new recycled 'bar hole plug' in our Edinburgh depot. The act of reinstatement can now be completed in just a few minutes by simply hammering in the recycled plugs, which come in a range of sizes, to fill the bar hole.

Outcome

Since we started using these recycled plugs, the number of defects has reduced by **87%**.

The new bar hole reinstatement technique has been shared across our business and with our reinstatement contractors.

Building a shared future

They said

Customers at our qualitative workshops told us they think we should be responsible for reducing the environmental impact of our supply chain, not just focus on our own direct impacts.

Expert stakeholders attending our sustainability round table meetings last year felt that we needed to build consideration of the circular economy and supply chain sustainability into our overall sustainability strategy.

Stakeholders who fed-back on our sustainable development goals acknowledged that we should treat 'responsible consumption and production' as a priority.

We did

We joined the **Supply Chain Sustainability School** as a partner. This is a free learning environment that upskills those working within the built environment and infrastructure sectors. The school's vision is to encourage world-class sustainable practices by being collaborative, progressive, inspirational and inclusive.

We are the first GDN to join this initiative enabling us to upskill our contractors and supply chain, and have a positive impact on the sustainability school itself by sharing our knowledge and expertise in relation to addressing the challenges of meeting our future energy needs.

We have already begun to embrace the principles of this school in our procurement processes. For example, we switched our purchasing arrangements so the majority of our electricity comes from **100%** certified renewable wind and hydro power.

Outcome

Joining this initiative is a great example of how we are scaling-up our impact through collaboration within our existing supply chain and across industry sectors. It supports our engagement with our supply chain and contractors, reducing their impact on the environment and contributing to several of our sustainable development goals and targets.

Switching to green electricity means our carbon footprint from electricity consumption will be close to **zero**, a saving of more than **3,600** tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. This is the equivalent over **2,100** households switching their electricity consumption to renewable electricity.

Measuring benefits and effectiveness

We undertake periodic 'waves' of stakeholder satisfaction surveys to measure and track our stakeholders' overall satisfaction and feedback in relation to our performance. Our efforts to progress up the 'engagement ladder', moving from simply informing our stakeholders to more genuine collaboration and co-creation was reflected in the survey results this year, with improvements in relation to 'SGN is responsive to stakeholder feedback and needs' and 'Stakeholders have opportunities to challenge SGN and influence decision-making'.

Across the **eight** specialist workshop events we have hosted this year, attended by **104** stakeholders, we achieved high satisfaction scores (**96%** and above) across **six** key feedback metrics. When broken down by each event, we consistently saw high feedback scores ranging from **88%** to **100%** agreement with each satisfaction statement.

To further measure our effectiveness, we ran an internal feedback survey, with **150** colleagues responding from **10** different business areas. The purpose of this survey was to understand how well our

colleagues in other directorates understand our stakeholder engagement strategy, look for variations between departments, understand whether (and how) plans changed as a result of stakeholder feedback and reveal attitudes to stakeholder engagement, specifically whether colleagues feel that stakeholder engagement can reduce costs, enquiries and complaints and improve planning. We were also able to compare these results to a previous survey conducted in 2018. The internal survey identified that almost **three quarters** of departments across our

business were assisted in engaging their stakeholders by our dedicated internal team, and **over half** of the survey respondents changed plans as a result of stakeholder feedback.

The impact of our stakeholder engagement has generated interesting results, with employees reporting in 2020 that the greater amount of engagement we undertake does sometimes elicit a greater volume of enquiries (which can bring more cost). However, **89%** of respondents agreed that we plan our work better with input from stakeholders.

	Total agreement			Mar '19 vs Mar '20
	Aug '18	Mar '19	Mar '20	
<i>SGN is responsive to stakeholder feedback and needs</i>	64.3%	65.1%	68.9%	+3.8%
<i>Stakeholders have opportunities to challenge SGN and influence decision-making</i>	56.8%	56.4%	60.8%	+4.4%

Reviewing and refining

Assurance, accreditation and awards

Over the last few years we have commissioned PwC to periodically undertake an **independent gap analysis assessment** of our approach to stakeholder engagement against AccountAbility's AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard. The first of these was undertaken in March 2017, followed by January 2018 and most recently in March 2020. In our most recent assessment, we made significant improvements, turning all but **three** of **26** elements of the standard to green. This indicates the majority of our processes are fully in line with the current standard, with only minor adjustments required in these three areas. These results illustrate our journey of continuous improvement over the last few years.

Section 2	Section 3	Section 4 - Stakeholder engagement process			
Commit and integration	Purpose, scope and stakeholders	Plan	Prepare	Invite stakeholders to engage	Review and improve
2.1 Commit to AA1000 principles	3.1 Purpose of engagement	4.1.1 Profile and map stakeholders	4.2.1 Mobilise resources	4.3.1 Invite stakeholders to engage	4.4.1 Monitor and evaluate engagement
2.2 Organisational governance	3.2 Scope of engagement	4.1.2 Determine engagement level and method	4.2.2 Build capacity	4.3.2 Brief stakeholders	4.4.2 Learn and improve
2.3 Organisational strategy	3.3.1 Mandate and ownership	4.1.3 Establish and communicate boundaries of disclosure	4.2.3 Identify and prepare for engagement risks	4.3.3 Engage	4.4.3 Develop and follow up on action plan
2.4 Operational management	3.3.2 Stakeholder identification	4.1.4 Draft engagement plan		4.3.4 Document the engagement and its outputs	4.4.4 Report on engagement
		4.1.5 Establish indicators		4.3.5 Develop an action plan	
				4.3.6 Communicate engagement outputs and action plan	

- Current process in line with standard guidelines
- Current process largely in line with standard guidelines - minor adjustments required
- Current process partially addresses the standard guidelines - action required
- Significant gaps between current process and standard guidelines

Additional assurance and accreditations

- ✓ We have maintained **18477:2010 BS1 accreditation**, first gained last year, for identifying vulnerable customers.
- ✓ We have retained the **Carbon Trust Standard** for continuing to achieve year-on-year reductions in our business carbon footprint.
- ✓ This submission has been compiled and submitted in accordance with our data assurance process, which complies with Ofgem's data assurance licence conditions.

An award-winning year for our business

- ✓ We were shortlisted for the Customer Service award at the **2019 Gas Industry Awards**, and won **Company of the Year** in recognition of our all-round strong performance.
- ✓ Our Real-Time Networks project scooped an award in the '**Energy Data Collection and Analysis Project of the year**' category at the **2019 Energy Awards**. This project has the potential to bring significant benefits to stakeholders by playing a key role in demonstrating how a flexible gas network can help meet our current and future energy needs for a more efficient, low-carbon and affordable gas future.
- ✓ We won the **Highways Maintenance Efficiency Award** for our Epsom Road replacement project which we undertook in collaboration with Croydon Council and Thames Water.

PART 2: How we've listened, acted and delivered

We've established three commitments to all our customers and stakeholders that are underpinned by seven customer and stakeholder-driven priorities:

COMMITMENT:	MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT	BUILDING A SHARED FUTURE	DELIVERING A SAFE AND EFFICIENT SERVICE
Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing excellent service • Supporting vulnerable communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering future energy solutions • Minimising environmental impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping the gas flowing • Acting safely • Keeping costs down

These priorities flow throughout everything we do, giving us focus, purpose and accountability. We know, thanks to our comprehensive programme of engagement and research, that these are the things that matter most to our stakeholders and customers. This year, we have deepened the quality and purpose of our engagement, and worked with our employees to further embed their understanding of customer priorities, and in particular their desire for us to focus on vulnerability.

Customers and stakeholders have helped us shape our activities, ensuring they deliver the right outcomes and measurable benefits. Collaboration and partnerships have helped us establish deep and enduring engagement with stakeholders, providing insights that have informed business decisions and our approach. In each of the examples below, we have set out how listening to stakeholders and customers has identified a need for us to act; what the activity is, and what outcomes we have achieved.

Ofgem SEI criteria

Ofgem use the five criteria listed below to assess the activities we've included in our report. In each case we've identified which of the criteria we believe is addressed by our activity:

- Holistic and embedded
- Innovative
- Benefitting challenging groups
- Robustly managed and resourced
- Sharing best practice

Measuring and evaluating outcomes – the role of social value

In 2018/19 we reported on our work with industry-leading social impact research consultancy Simetrica. We developed a tool, with support from stakeholders, that could estimate the social value generated from our initiatives. Over the past year we've further refined and improved the accuracy of our comprehensive bank of financial, health and wellbeing outcomes, showing how they generate social value. We've extended the use of the tool to now measure the social value of activities such as new gas connections to fuel poor households and vocational training. This has led to improvements in how we assess the cost-benefit analysis of new projects or initiatives before they begin, and is in addition to our pre-assessment project evaluation process described in Part One.

Our customers have told us they support investment in enhanced services, particularly where we can demonstrate clear benefits for those in vulnerable situations. Identifying the social value of our activities allows us to assess and measure the positive impact they have on our customers. Last year, Ofgem's stakeholder panel cautioned that social value measurement of this kind might not always be robust. In response, we have undertaken a series of key engagements to enhance our approach and today we apply best practice methodology and use high-quality data sources to measure the social value we create.

We firmly believe in applying social value as an important component to inform better decisions in the interest of our stakeholders and customers. With that in mind, in September 2019 we held a cross-sector round table meeting in London, to explore shared understanding, experience and concepts relating to social value. Participants included representatives from HM Treasury and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the energy and construction sectors and organisations including the Capitals Coalition and Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (HACT).

The Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears MP delivered the keynote speech on social value policy. This included an in-depth look at the social, economic and environmental considerations in public procurement, identified as critical to the objective of embedding social value as 'business as usual' for organisations across all sectors. Attendees shared the view that by having a consistent methodology to measure the social impact of activities, the benefits of embedding social value considerations into business operations could be substantial and wide-reaching. This was a firm recommendation from our stakeholders, that there should be a new, industry-wide framework for consistently measuring and reporting social value.

- ✓ Holistic and embedded
- ✓ Sharing best practice

To move this forward, we organised a second roundtable for GDNs, DNOs and Transmission network operators, to share and showcase how we each evaluate the social impacts of our work. This was followed by a detailed discussion about the opportunities, benefits and challenges of developing a consistent and transparent methodology to allow comparisons in social impact performance between companies. The outcome was agreement on a common approach to the 'hierarchy' of information sources used to derive social value:

- Achieved results, e.g. measurable benefits that can be evidenced
- A bank of common social value proxies, e.g. values from HM Treasury's Green Book, Citizens Advice
- Assured data from academic / charity organisations, e.g. wellbeing valuation, peer-reviewed research
- Other data sources, e.g. stated preference (willingness to pay) results undertaken in accordance with a common set of research principles and methodologies

“A joined-up and robust approach, that is understood and supported by stakeholders, will encourage network companies to focus on the delivery of measurable benefits, rather than how those benefits are calculated.”

Cross-network social value meeting attendee

MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT

We provide a range of additional services for customers in vulnerable circumstances through our front-line engineers. This year we have further rolled this out to our contractors and other SGN staff, ensuring that wherever vulnerability is identified we are able to offer support and signposting. Continuing our work with specialist partners has ensured we've further scaled-up our activities this year.

The overall social value generated by our activities this year was **£6,381,698**.

	2018/19 number of customers supported	2019/20 number of customers supported	Increase in activity this year
Energy efficiency advice and measures	2,859	2,866	0.2%
Referrals for safe and well visits, appliance repairs and Locking Cooker Valves (LCVs)	263	818	211%
Extra services	3,122	3,684	18%
Priority Services Register (PSR) referrals	3,295	4,597	40%
TOTAL services including PSR	6,417	8,281	29%

We arranged workshops for stakeholders and customers to discuss in depth the activities we undertake to support vulnerable and fuel poor customers. Together, we constructed a three-tier framework, where tier 1 activities are most expensive to deliver, but provide the greatest benefit (and social value) to recipients, and where tiers 2 and 3 consist of services that are less expensive but also less impactful. The consensus was that we should try to help fewer customers more deeply (tier 1), rather than provide less impactful support to greater numbers of customers.

This year:

- **16%** of our activities were tier 1 (for example appliance repairs), generating **£5,036,185** of social value
- **16%** were tier 2 (such as installing locking cooker valves), generating **£649,114** of social value
- **68%** were tier 3 (for example PSR referrals) generating **£696,399** of social value

Working with project partners to reach vulnerable customers

Partnership working is critical to how we provide additional services to vulnerable customers and contribute to the totals shown in the table above.

- Our **Warm and Well Milton Keynes** outreach scheme, in collaboration with **Western Power Distribution (WPD)** and **National Energy Foundation**, targets areas of high deprivation and eligibility for the PSR using WPD's social indicator map. This year, through robust project management, we've delivered more outputs for the same level of funding:
 - **403** households received advice
 - **133** tariffs switched, energy efficiency measures provided, or warm home discounts received
 - **7** boilers repaired/upgraded
 - **57** PSR referrals
 - **21** food bank vouchers issued
- **Community Energy South** have helped us engage **1,612** customers through energy cafes and clinics. We've been able to train **401** individuals, of which **184** have targeted harder to reach ethnic minority communities. We have built on this model to extend our energy cafes and switching advice in Scotland through a partnership with **Changeworks**.
- Continuing our partnership with **Warmworks** in Scotland to support loft clearance and remedial work has enabled **50** households to receive energy advice, boiler upgrades and additional insulation measures.

- ✓ **Benefitting challenging groups**
- ✓ **Robustly managed and resourced**



Responding early to the coronavirus pandemic to support vulnerable customers

We recognised early on that the implications of the UK Government's drastic but necessary response to the COVID-19 pandemic could be disproportionately severe for customers in vulnerable circumstances. To help mitigate the impact on this group, we teamed up with seven other utility networks* to provide **£500,000** funding to local community foundations across the south of England and Scotland. The money was used to boost local community resilience, supporting local foodbanks, volunteer centres, food delivery services and outreach programmes for those at risk of isolation. The implications of this crisis will be far-reaching and prolonged for everyone, through 2020 and beyond. A comprehensive report on our response to the pandemic will be submitted in our 2021 submission.

* UK Power Networks, Southern Water, Thames Water, Anglian Water, Affinity Water, SES Water and South East Water

Empowering our people to support our most vulnerable customers

Customers and stakeholders frequently remind us that we should support vulnerable customers in need of additional help. A key driver in how and where we deliver support is our own people's ability to identify vulnerable customers, engage with them successfully and ensure they are referred for the help they need. This year we have increased our investment in training our workforce, improving the scale and breadth of our activities to fully embed and build knowledge and understanding in all parts of our business.

We have introduced a range of vulnerability awareness tools to help our front-line people better support vulnerable customers. A key example is our **Customer Toolkit**, which is available for use by our engineers via an app. This year, we've enhanced our customer toolkit and rolled it out to all front-line engineers, who collectively accessed it more than **1,100** times.

Last year we reported on our referral app that allows our front-line FCO engineers to provide vulnerable customers with the opportunity to register for up to **five** additional services: our **appliance repair scheme, safe and well visits from Fire & Rescue**, registration to the **Priority Services Register (PSR)**, application for a **Locking Cooker Valve (LCV)** and referral for **energy advice** from partners. This year, we gave the app to **all** front-line employees who encounter customers in their day-to-day activities. Referrals are now made by our replacement teams, repair teams, connections surveyors and our contractors, as well as our FCOs.

This year we have referred **529** customers, resulting in **865** service requests.

Almost **2,700** customers told us they were vulnerable this year, a **4%** increase on last year. **Two thirds** of these registrations came through our mains replacement teams, where we have embedded a process for serving vulnerable customers who may be impacted by our work. Properties impacted by mains replacement activity are cross checked against a list of known vulnerable customers. The job card is marked with a green '**P**' to advise the team that additional priority customer support may be required.

Vulnerable circumstances training is given to our employees and contractors to ensure they provide consistently high levels of vulnerable customer support. Contractors have access to the same digital training materials as our own staff and this year **1,587** engineers, including **610** contractors, have received this face-to-face training. Contractors are trained to understand how their work affects vulnerable customers, and are equipped with knowledge of our additional services, such as the process for PSR registrations, to ensure their needs for additional support are met.

Additionally, this training is available online to all employees across the business. **1,729** of our staff have registered for this e-learning, of which **1,538** are in customer-facing roles.

- ✓ Holistic and embedded
- ✓ Benefitting challenging groups
- ✓ Robustly managed and resourced



Customer Toolkit

The toolkit builds awareness of different vulnerability personas, such as age, hearing, sight, physical and mental health, fuel poor, mobility and language. It provides guidance and refresher information on:

- key things to look and listen out for while out on site
- tailoring services depending on the vulnerabilities encountered
- support available to help with next steps
- PSR (Priority Services Register) referral scheme and other services we offer via our trusted partners
- our '**Engineer Textline**', which provides an escalation route to highlight a vulnerable customer being left without gas
- use of **Language Line** to assist with translating conversations with non-English speaking customers.

Case study

Working with partners to enhance support for vulnerable customers - Coltswood Court

Our front-line engineers wanted to identify and support different categories of vulnerable customers during our planned works, such as higher proportions of elderly people or non-English speakers. We've achieved that by using **DNO Data Mapping Tools**, applying advanced vulnerability metrics to cross reference with our data, to identify vulnerable customers.

At Coltswood Court in Coatbridge, Lanarkshire, **28** residents living in high-rise accommodation were left without gas following a leak on the riser service pipe. Using the tool and working with the local authority, highlighted that a significant proportion of these residents were vulnerable and would need additional support during the planned eight weeks of replacement work. We enlisted the partners Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS), Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) and Home Energy Scotland (HES) and managed the provision of additional support to impacted residents.

This included a community event giving talks on safety, energy efficiency, accessing benefits and PSR advice. We provided thermal socks, hand warmers and hot food vouchers, and SPEN issued **30** winter emergency packs. The well attended event was followed up with a voucher for residents to use at the local take-away.

Our work over the eight weeks received no complaints or enquiries, which we believe is partly attributable to our proactive approach with residents. Our engagement activity resulted in **18** residents signing up to the PSR, and **five** customers requesting **14** additional support services.

Operationally, we were able to enhance our approach through an innovative technique called **orbital welding**, reducing disruption for vulnerable customers and improving safety. Using this technique significantly reduced disruption and minimised inconvenience for residents as the need to gain access to resident's properties was dramatically reduced by around **two thirds**.

- ✓ Innovative
- ✓ Benefitting challenging groups
- ✓ Robustly managed and resourced

“I'd like to thank you all for your hard work on this issue, your welfare based approach and the way you have continued to keep residents informed.”

MSP Fulton MacGregor, commenting on Twitter in relation to our collaborative efforts



Collaborating to support customers in fuel poverty and scaling up the outcomes

Our Help to Heat programme supports both the UK and Scottish Governments' commitment to tackling fuel poverty by helping to transform homes to be warmer and more energy efficient. Help is targeted to where it's needed most, increasing comfort and wellbeing in the coldest low-income homes.

Experts on our fuel poverty specialist panels advised us to extend our reach and collaboration with trusted partners, and use data to prioritise areas where our support would deliver the most impactful outcomes.

This year, we have increased the number of our **partnerships** in targeted areas from **30 to 38**, enabling improved support and delivering stronger outcomes for fuel poor customers.

Working with **SSEN** and **YES Energy Solutions** we've broadened the scope of our existing support to include advice on energy supplier switching, funding for energy efficiency measures, referrals to the PSR and specialist debt counselling and advice.

Through our partnership with **East Sussex Energy Partnership**, **2,300** customers have been supported by **Citizens Advice** through the 'client journey' to ensure holistic advice is given focusing on managing household finances or improving health and social welfare. This has been particularly beneficial for customers with health conditions who might have struggled to cope with the installation of central heating.

- Through this partnership initiative **443** households were supported, with **561** minor measures carried out, of which **38** households received a major heating or insulation measure.
- We identified **50** households where a customer's health would be at risk from living in a cold home, providing **£71,290** in additional welfare benefits.
- In addition, we supported **308** customers to switch their energy tariff, creating projected savings of **£67,219**.
- Applications to the Warm Home Discount were made for **430** people, delivering savings of **£35,490**.

Building on the SGN Central Heating Grant Fund

The **SGN central heating grant** funding, which has been a vital component when building relationships with our partner organisations, now includes energy suppliers with **ECO** funding.

This is significant as we are now able to work with partners to blend our grant fund with other sources of finance, such as **ECO** and the **Warms Homes Fund**, and have provided gap funding for **1,488 central heating systems** in our southern network.

Embedding awareness of fuel poverty across our business

Stakeholders have asked us to do more to extend our support to fuel poor customers. Our **Help to Heat** team has developed a wide range of communication mechanisms to engage staff across our business and raise awareness of the impact that fuel poverty has on a household, including:

- Internal National Energy Action housewarming events
- A fuel poverty briefing on our internal app
- Internal team briefings
- A dedicated video
- Training slides for front-line staff and information leaflets for them to distribute

Delivering fuel poor connections in a changing environment

While there remains policy uncertainty around the future of heat, and with a growing number of councils declaring climate emergencies, it is critical that we are perceived as low carbon partners for our Help to Heat programme to continue to deliver benefit. In response to our recent local authority survey, which indicated we need to engage to understand their long-term energy plans, we're making and embracing opportunities to share how we are decarbonising the gas network, including presenting to the Association of Local Energy Officers in London and the South East.

In our southern network, **69** of the **95** councils have declared climate emergencies. In that context, we're proud to have delivered **1,273** fuel poor connections this year, the second-highest annual number in our current price control period. Our total number of southern fuel poor connections now stands at **8,289**, **80%** of our GD1 target for southern.

In Scotland, where fuel poor customers benefit from a Scottish Government-backed programme for in-house measures, we continue to collaborate with the Energy Savings Trust and Warmworks to ensure that fuel poor households have the best customer journey and access to all eligible support.

We are well ahead of our Scottish target, having added **955** fuel poor connections this year. Our GD1 total for Scotland stands at **20,033**, **17% over** our target.

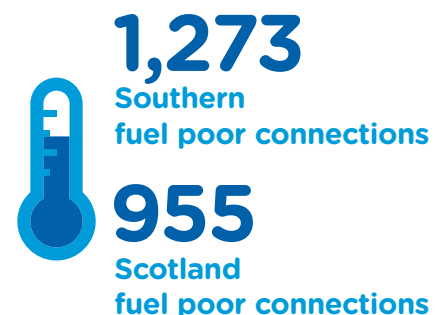
This year, these connections have generated social value worth over **£2.7m** in southern and **£2.3m** in Scotland.

- ✓ Holistic and embedded
- ✓ Benefitting challenging groups
- ✓ Robustly managed and resourced

Extending targeted support

We've embedded our data mapping tool into our partner activity. This has extended the reach of our data mapping capabilities and enabled our trusted partners to identify areas with a greater proportion of households with the potential to receive a funded gas connection. Our partners have now mapped **40** potential areas likely to be eligible and within connectable distance to the existing gas network. Councils and other partners are using this to target their engagement.

We have developed an eligibility 'quick check' tool to support our referral partners and ensure that correct eligibility is entered for each tenure. The tool has now been shared with **38** active partners; streamlining the process and helping to clarify eligibility rules for the scheme.



Our award-winning people

Poole depot employee **Laura Wicks** was made an **NEA Heat Hero** at a ceremony at the House of Commons. Laura was recognised for her efforts to go above-and-beyond in assisting fuel poor households to receive funded gas connections and heating systems. Not even an ancient monk's burial site could get in her way: discovered while we were excavating, Laura tracked down a local archaeologist to help so that the fuel poor project could still proceed.

Case study

Ofgem visit to Arun project

We arranged an Ofgem visit to our Help to Heat partnership project with Arun District Council. Local towns Bognor Regis and Littlehampton are among the 20% most deprived areas in the UK, with 4,942 households experiencing fuel poverty. We were delighted to welcome Ofgem's chairman Martin Cave and Rebecca Pickett and bring to life the challenges fuel poor households face when trying to make improvements with limited funding and resources and the obstacles faced when planning installations.

We have provided the Council with **£723,000** from the SGN Central Heating Grant Fund, to be put towards the cost of first-time central heating systems. So far **256** connections have been made with another **51** connections in progress.

During our visit a number of local residents spoke about life without affordable heating and explained how health and living conditions have significantly improved thanks to gas central heating. A number of residents told us they shed tears of joy when the work was completed and they had instant hot water. They reported improved health as a result of being warm, have noticed less damp and are not anxious about the cost of turning the heating on.

In a Citizens Advice conference speech a few days later, Martin Cave said *"I have seen the joy of a couple who overnight became able to enjoy a warm home, as the result of a new gas network connection and affordable central heating."*



From left: Martin Cave (Chair, Ofgem), John Morea (CEO, SGN), Marie Jones (SGN), Nick Hyland (MPS Housing)

256 connections made
51 connections in progress

Making contact and access to information easier for our customers

At our workshops, stakeholders have told us that they believe customers' expectations are increasing. This year, we held qualitative workshops with customers, where they told us that they expect to access information when and how they want, without inconvenience. We're training our people to provide the right information that's easily accessible, so that we see a marked reduction in customers needing to get in touch.

'You make the difference' training, introduced this year, has been completed by over **1,500** of our front-line engineers. The scenario-based training addresses activities where customer satisfaction is often down to the quality and content of our communication, such as when reinstatement work will occur. We've produced training videos to share best practice techniques from our own engineers, which have been rolled-out to our operational teams and contractors.

Understanding the issues: customer focus groups

Over the last few years we've introduced measures such as tailored project delivery to reduce the disruption caused by our planned works in response to customer and stakeholder feedback. The importance of this has been emphasised by stakeholders in our southern network, where the negative impacts of disruption can be more severe. This year we held customer focus groups with four southern replacement depots and all southern connections depots. Feedback from these engagements either related to local experiences, or more generally to the strength of our communication and quality of the information we provide.

Acting on feedback: improving our communications. General dissatisfaction over communication has been addressed in a number of ways, specifically across our digital channels and timed with the launch of our new website in 2019.

This included:

- **Recite Me:** an accessibility tool improving how customers with communication challenges can self-serve from our website, for example by speaking or translating text. Used **2,561** times by customers since September.
- **Improved live chat:** used **7,268** times by customers over the year (up **15%** on 2018/19).
- **Connections enquiries web pages:** improvements to self-servicing has resulted in fewer applications via phone, email and post and a **25%** increase in online applications.
- **one.network roadworks information:** this year our streetworks information has been published on the one.network website, leading to a **17%** reduction in direct enquires about timescales and traffic management. Visits to access our information on the one.network website are **11.5%** higher than on our website last year.

Many customers prefer to access or receive information off-line and we ensure our printed literature and information follows best practice that puts customers' interests first.

Acting on feedback: Customer Connections.

We were receiving around **13,000** customer enquiries per year across both networks relating to connections work. This year we introduced a new leaflet for Connections customers called 'Welcome to your new gas supply'. Almost **6,000** leaflets have already been distributed, explaining how a customer's connection will proceed, our (and their) responsibilities during the works, and their SGN Account Manager's contact details. Since its introduction enquiries have fallen by **34%**. We're pleased that satisfaction with our southern connections performance has improved, from **8.77** overall to **9.01** for this year.

- ✓ Holistic and embedded
- ✓ Robustly managed and resourced

Improvements in replacement. We've seen a **44% reduction** in 'arrangements to carry out work' enquiries as a result of improved information we provide in advance to customers and the 'You make the difference training'. Furthermore, our Emergency and Repair workstreams have seen a **16%** drop in enquiries following those teams completing the same training. Our engineers' improved customer engagement skills have contributed to a **10%** reduction in progress enquiries and a **25%** reduction in customer contact post competition.

Overall, we have reduced enquires by **19%** across Emergency & Repair, Replacement and Connections. The improvements we've made in response to customer feedback are evidenced by the strong increases in customer satisfaction in the four depots where focus groups were undertaken.

Mains Replacement		
Depot	18/19	19/20
Thames Valley	8.24	8.37
Wessex	9.11	8.82
Kent	9.32	9.19
Burgess Hill	8.61	8.94
London West	8.60	8.93
London East	8.89	9.12

The two depots not participating in focus groups experienced a slight dip in their scores, demonstrating the positive impact of focus groups and changes to our processes and behaviour.

Addressing the needs of specific stakeholder groups: Third-Party Connections customers

In our 2018/19 stakeholder satisfaction survey, **17%** of respondents believed we needed 'urgent improvement' or 'could be performing better' around customer service, with Third-Party Connections customers most likely to report dissatisfaction. To understand specific concerns we ran a further survey and workshop to explore their issues in-depth. In particular, these related to quality and clarity of information in relevant forms and documentation, and the length of time the process was taking.

This year, we have taken action to significantly enhance our processes. We've introduced triage booking for Third-Party

Connections customers, improving our response time and dramatically speeding up the quotation process. Additionally, customer documentation, processes and forms have been reviewed to simplify and update all the information necessary in the application process.

We have since re-surveyed the customer-base, collecting feedback from over **30%** - a particularly high response rate. The results showed that **satisfaction has improved across all metrics**, most notably for the previous lowest scorings areas: 'time taken to process enquiries or requests' and 'time taken to resolve issues'.

✓ Robustly managed and resourced



BUILDING A SHARED FUTURE

Collaborating to address the social impact of heat decarbonisation

We have engaged extensively to support the UK's net zero targets and to build the necessary evidence required by Government on the decarbonisation of heat. Recognising the more stretching targets set in Scotland, we have asked advice of expert stakeholders through specialist panels. Acting on the panel's advice not to underestimate the impact on consumers of the transition to decarbonised heat, we are working with a local environmental charity, **Greener Kirkcaldy**, to develop a consumer pilot project, building on an existing Council-funded energy advice project in Levenmouth in Fife. This is also the

proposed site for **H100 Fife**, our hydrogen demonstration project, which aims to build the world's first green hydrogen-to-homes network and confirm hydrogen as a decarbonised heat source.

The consumer pilot surveyed **one hundred representative households** over three months, to measure how much the local community understands about heating technologies, and the barriers that could have an impact on a customer's willingness to consider green heating technologies.

Overwhelmingly, households in the Levenmouth area are most familiar with

gas for heating. Whilst **30%** had previously used or were familiar with storage heating, only **3%** had any prior experience of electric radiators. Households also said they were most comfortable and confident with gas and this was their preferred heating technology, with **81%** ranking it their top preference. Affordability was a dominant factor in the survey, with **60 out of 84** comments saying energy costs were a concern. Reducing carbon emissions was mentioned by **46%** of respondents.

The survey responses below illustrate a concern and reluctance to move to away from gas to another heating technology:

✓ Benefitting challenging groups
✓ Robustly managed and resourced

“As I've only ever used gas central heating, I'd be hesitant to make any changes without fully understanding the benefits.”

“Gas central heating is all I've ever had so I wouldn't really want to change now.”

“Gas is all I know and that took me long enough to get used to, I wouldn't want to make big changes now at my age.”

Stakeholders shaping our H100 pathway to net zero

Stakeholders have continually shaped our **H100 Fife** project, which aims to initially connect 300 homes to a **100% green hydrogen** network.

Levenmouth site selection and project partnership

Fife Council highlighted the unique combination of technologies and natural resources on site at Levenmouth, such as proximity to ORE Catapult's offshore wind demonstration turbine. The Council also spoke of the social deprivation in the area and the economic opportunity that our project could bring. We have now decided that Levenmouth should be the selected site for our H100 project. The ORE Catapult turbine is also an integral part of the project, which will allow us to produce hydrogen through electrolysis using zero carbon electricity.

- ✓ **Innovative**
- ✓ **Robustly managed and resourced**
- ✓ **Sharing best practice**



homes to be initially connected to 100% green hydrogen network

Scottish Enterprise emphasised the importance of demonstrating economic benefit for training and education. The scope of the project now includes a permanent demonstration facility for communities to learn about hydrogen as a means for heating, the energy systems transformation, and hydrogen appliances in the home.

Collaborating with partners on future energy solutions

Expert stakeholders advised us to work collaboratively and be part of a common voice to help inform government policy decisions on future energy solutions. We have subsequently scaled-up our partnerships, and are now working with over **45** partners to support this goal.

We are active participants in **Gas Goes Green**, the world's first comprehensive programme to decarbonise the gas grid and transform our networks to deliver net zero emissions gas to consumers nationwide. The programme brings together the engineering expertise from all of the UK's gas network operators. Combined, we aim to meet the challenges and opportunities of climate change in the most cost effective and least disruptive way possible, engaging widely to deliver programmes and initiatives across the country.

We've played an active part in NECCUS, an industry-led partnership to support Scottish industry with meeting the clean industrial growth challenge and the Scottish and UK net zero targets.

We have worked in partnership with National Grid and expert stakeholders, including the Scottish Government, to understand current and long-term aspirations for hydrogen in Scotland. The biggest changes identified by stakeholders were achieving a just and fair transition, skills availability, and social acceptance. We are now jointly developing a Scottish Pathways project to support Scottish net zero targets, building on the work which has been developed by the gas distribution networks at a national (GB) scale.

Hy4Heat collaboration

Complementing the H100 Fife project, the **Hy4Heat** project is investigating if hydrogen can replace natural gas in buildings and gas appliances.

We've shared learnings from our Oban project, including data on appliances and customer engagement. We've also taken a leading role in helping Hy4Heat to build a comparative model which assesses the risks associated with the switch from natural gas to hydrogen. This involved developing a survey for use by our front-line FCOs to improve knowledge of natural gas characteristics in relation to gas escapes. This data will be used to identify process changes, site actions or training required for hydrogen.

Hydrogen appliances and meters being developed under Hy4Heat will be considered for the H100 programme.

✓ Sharing best practice



NECCUS aims to support accelerated deployment of Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage (CCUS) technologies in Scotland and the further development of the Scottish supply chain. As a founding member, we have developed a roadmap to set out how net zero industrial clusters can be achieved.

NECCUS

Collaborative planning on the use of our networks

We've strengthened and deepened our strategic relationships and collaboration with central and local government in network and energy planning, in line with advice from our Stakeholder Advisory Panel.

Joining forces to address climate change

This year, we've developed new partnerships with a number of local authorities in both our networks. We're working with the Western Isles Council on a hydrogen project for Stornoway, and we are members of the Climate Ready Clyde (CRC) partnership, influencing Glasgow City Region's first climate resilience and adaptation strategy. This CRC partnership has now successfully bid for Climate-KIC funding, one of only four successful cities globally to secure these funds.

Stakeholders influencing our network planning

We have formed an industry leading partnership with the Improvement Service

(IS), the national improvement organisation for local government in Scotland. We are currently the only utility company to share our network planning data on their **Spatial Hub**; a national online data bank for all local authorities in Scotland. Our network data has already been accessed **48** times, helping to ensure our plans are aligned with local planning and support local development.

In our southern network, the Greater London Authority (GLA) provided us access to its infrastructure mapping application, an interactive online GIS tool which integrates infrastructure and development data, encouraging co-ordination and strategic planning across Greater London (as illustrated by our 'Croydon in collaboration' project described in the next section). We have now embedded the Infrastructure Mapping Application into our longer-term collaborative planning with the GLA and

- ✓ **Holistic and embedded**
- ✓ **Robustly managed and resourced**
- ✓ **Sharing best practice**

Islands Growth Deal

We're partnering with Western Isles Council on a feasibility study and options appraisal for hydrogen production at Stornoway's Deep Water Port. We've won funding from the Scottish Government's Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Fund to bring the project to life.

Thames Water by providing details of our planned mains replacement programme up to **2032**. This enables greater foresight and flexibility when identifying future collaborative opportunities.

Building awareness of future skills and opportunities

At workshops and in feedback surveys our stakeholders and customers consistently tell us they expect SGN to play a role in promoting and creating future skills. As well as being active in the traditional STEM subjects, stakeholders - future customers in particular - want us to educate on the future of heat.

Our longstanding partnership with **Solutions for the Planet (S4TP)** continues to inspire young people to develop sustainable and creative solutions to environmental and societal problems. Over the last three years **73** of our employees have taken part as mentors for **3,963** school children. This year we supported **1,075** students, our highest annual number to date.

We have sponsored S4TP's **Big Ideas** programme over the last five years, working with over **200** business mentors and reaching more than **20,000** 11 to 14-

year-olds to develop their STEM and enterprise skills for the rest of their lives. After attending a Big Ideas day, **72%** of young people say they are more interested in STEM subjects, and **85%** say they know more about sustainability.

Our partnership with Scotland's Energy Skills Partnership, Dundee & Angus and Orkney Colleges has helped us test and develop an innovative **online hydrogen skills tool** for school and college students, community groups, government and its agencies, and companies and their employees. It's designed to improve awareness around hydrogen, its production, applications, safety considerations and opportunities for careers. Over **135** Scottish college students have successfully completed the tool and received a **Certificate of Competence**.

- ✓ Innovative
- ✓ Benefitting challenging groups

“I just wanted to give you a big thank you for all the support that you have given students over the past few months. The students have shown resilience and passion...they could not have done this without your dedication and care.”

Claire Flitton,
Programme Coordinator,
Solutions for the Planet



Working with stakeholders to embed a culture of sustainability

Stakeholders have told us that they expect us to reduce our environmental impact and not just focus on reducing leakage of natural gas. Our customer research confirms the same and consistently shows that environment is an area where our customers would be most willing to pay for performance improvements.

We're embedding a deeper understanding of sustainability across our business and are aligning to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve better and more sustainable outcomes. Employees and external stakeholders have helped us prioritise the SDGs for our business (fig 1).

In 2019, we participated in the Climate Leadership Framework (CLF), a pioneering new scheme run by the Carbon Trust. This has further helped shape our sustainability thinking: our net zero strategy scored 7.4 with our expert stakeholder panel. Our top three SDGs, shown at top right in fig.1, are all linked to the work we're doing to decarbonise the gas in our networks and our business. That includes our focus on hydrogen and how we're encouraging greater volumes of biomethane in our networks. One issue for biomethane stakeholders was how uncertainty around the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) was making it difficult to

- ✓ Holistic and embedded
- ✓ Robustly managed and resourced

commission new projects. We have engaged with political stakeholders on this topic and in March 2020, the UK Government announced that the RHI will be extended for another year, to March 2022.

We currently supply the equivalent of around **230,000** households with biomethane, and remain on track to hit our target of 250,000 by March 2021. This year we have worked with partners to reduce propane use and have increased the injection rate of biomethane at **six** locations.



Figure 1 Size indicates the ability of the business to contribute to the goal

Our award-winning people

Environment Manager Faye Tester was selected as one of edie's **30 under 30**, joining a prestigious list of the most outstanding up-and-coming sustainability leaders.



Last year we reduced our business carbon footprint (excluding gas leakage) by **8%**, the biggest annual reduction since 2012.

DELIVERING A SAFE AND EFFICIENT SERVICE

Using insight from customers to improve our streetworks

Stakeholders attending our Safety Culture roundtable recommended improvements to our safety strategy, specifically to develop our data and reporting systems. We have subsequently used data from customer enquiries and complaints to produce a new monthly safety report for managers, covering five key areas of customer-reported behaviours and activities. This year our year-end total for 'safe days' (zero incidents) was **64**, an improvement of **10 days** on last year's performance.

Acting on a recommendation from our Stakeholder Advisory Panel, we've taken action to better understand the impact of our activities on customers with disabilities by partnering with national disability charity **Scope** and holding a forum with **12** disabled customers. We had observed that across all activities site safety issues at street works accounted for the majority of customer-reported safety issues. In this forum we put our mains replacement activities under the spotlight, as experienced by disabled customers.

Partnering to prevent damage

Over **96%** of our stakeholders have told us that acting safely and keeping the gas flowing are important, reinforcing stakeholder feedback we've had in previous years that preventing damage to our network is key to maintaining supplies and keeping landowners and other people safe. We've built a range of initiatives with partners to prevent damage to our network.

Our strategic partnership with the **National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS)** gives us the opportunity to amplify our safety message. We've tailored it to reflect the views and opinions of NFUS members and co-created our Grantor's Charter, which clearly sets out our approach and expectations from working together in the interests of mutual safety.

For the third year running we've delivered training to employees and students of

The discussions brought to life the numerous issues experienced by disabled people in relation to our street works. Taking this feedback on board, our CEO John Morea took a leading role by undertaking a site visit with Scope and three disabled customers to witness their experiences of our works first-hand. Customers recommended we focus on on-site issues, such as road and footpath access, and also pre-work communication, on-site signage and prioritising the needs of disabled adults and children. We have now established a working group to make changes to the way we work.

Additionally, we have created a series of **'How we can help' videos** with Scope and UKPN to improve employee awareness of the extra support some customers may need. Topics, presented using first-hand experiences of disabled customers, include face-to-face communication, stress and anxiety and the importance of daily life and routine. We've made our videos available to other gas, electric and water utilities to establish a shared

Scotland's Rural Colleges. This year, we've extended our damage prevention module to include Borders College and the Dundee and Angus College, reaching a further **66** students, tailoring the content of our training to align with the course syllabus. We've supported the UK Onshore Pipeline Operators' Association (UKOPA) to adopt our engagement model and we've been invited to share our best practice with the wider UKOPA group. Our training module is being rolled-out to all land-based colleges in the UK, working with the other GDNs and partners UKOPA and Landex.

Using innovative technology

We've developed a range of innovative technologies to prevent damage and speed up hazard identification. These include satellite remote sensing, data analytics and bespoke software combined

- ✓ Holistic and embedded
- ✓ Benefitting challenging groups
- ✓ Robustly managed and resourced
- ✓ Sharing best practice



understanding of disabled customers' needs. We captured a number of positive stakeholder responses to this initiative, including:

- “ Really powerful videos of direct experience. Utilities need to amplify the voices of vulnerable customers and show other industries great leadership in this space. ”
- “ It's great to see videos that break down the awkwardness and don't cause offence. ”

- ✓ Holistic and embedded
- ✓ Innovative
- ✓ Sharing best practice

with GPS technology to allow the rapid collection of data to support early identification of any potential problems near our network. So far we've seen a **47%** reduction in encroachments in Scotland following training for **99** students and through our extended reach to **9000** stakeholders via our partnerships with NFUS and UKOPA.

We have started to replicate our Scottish approach in our southern network. We participated in the Velcourt Training Day in Wimborne, Dorset and trained **90** agricultural workers on how to avoid damaging our plant using our online service LSBUD.



vulnerable. With the shared data we were able to prioritise support, identify and utilise the skills of all the agencies and our own staff to make sure customers were looked after while the gas was off and prioritise getting the gas back on to the most vulnerable.

Joining forces to provide mutual aid during the Falkirk incident

Resilience partners in both our networks told us they had limited or no knowledge of how we managed a loss of gas supply incident in the communities they support. As a result we agreed a three-year programme of depot 'mock incidents' across our footprint to ensure we have robust plans in place and can call upon resilience partners for support if there is a loss of gas supply in the community.

This and our active participation in the Scottish Resilience Framework became invaluable when **8000** customers in the

Falkirk area of Scotland lost their gas supply in one of the coldest weeks last winter, with temperatures down to **-5°C**. We were able to enact agreed plans with our resilience partners who responded quickly, providing a local incident site where multi-agency partners could work together to support the local community. A key priority was supporting the most vulnerable customers in the area. Over half the customers affected were on the PSR, and resilience partners were able to identify around **650** who were critically

Help from local partners meant we were able to focus on getting the gas back on as quickly as possible. To make sure we had enough engineers in the area we initiated mutual aid arrangements with other GDNs, bringing help from across Great Britain to deliver a truly UK-wide response to the incident. In addition, we were able to call upon engineers from Northern Ireland, the local authority, and several metering and mains replacement contractors, with engineers travelling from as far as the Isle of Wight, Stornoway and Belfast to assist with the incident.

We know on some occasions when we put the gas back on customers' appliances can fail. To ensure customers in these circumstances got their appliances working we engaged Gas Safe registered engineers to fix any faults. Our effective

and collaborative response to the incident meant we were able to restore gas supplies **two days** earlier than originally projected.

To keep people informed we updated the dedicated incident page on our website every four hours. Our **22** tweets during the incident were viewed more than **623,000** times and our **16** Facebook updates were seen more than **175,000** times. We also gave **22** TV and radio interviews, including a feature on the BBC's 'The One Show'.

Resilience partners were extremely supportive, sharing our social media messaging through their channels as well as linking to our incident webpage from their websites,



enabling our messaging to travel further across the affected community.

A survey of resilience partners following the incident scored us **4.6 out of 5.0** on our ability to prepare, respond and recover during the incident. The subsequent multi-agency de-brief identified areas of further improvement that we are incorporating into future responses. This includes further enhancements our Incident App, which manages and tracks tasks to resolve a gas supply emergency, in order to better identify vulnerable customers from a range of data sources, and prioritise critically vulnerable customers in an emergency.

We have now donated a total of **£20,000** to support local community organisations following the incident.

Collaborating on our streetworks: Croydon in collaboration

Customers attending our workshops have repeated their interest in utilities collaborating more to reduce the amount of streetworks. In 2016, TfL estimated that traffic congestion cost London's economy £6.7bn a year, with 15% caused by streetworks.

In 2018, we reported on our planned innovative approach to minimise disruption - a streetworks project in collaboration with Thames Water, the London Borough of Croydon and the Greater London Authority (GLA). Last summer we coordinated our mains replacement work and the council's road resurfacing so that residents, businesses and road users didn't have to suffer separate periods of disruption.

Our joined-up approach reduced noise, air pollution, lorry movements and traffic delays and saved money. Hailed as best practice by the GLA, this approach is now set to be rolled-out across other

London boroughs by the Mayor of London's Infrastructure and Development Coordination Team, and planning for further collaborative projects is underway.

The Croydon project aimed to test the benefits and any constraints arising through collaboration of this kind. In January we met with the London Mayor and GLA members to present our findings:

- ✓ **85** days of road closures avoided
- ✓ **£588,000** of economic benefit
- ✓ circa **£200,000** of financial benefit
- ✓ **98%** resident satisfaction
- ✓ A collaborative handbook created
- ✓ **Four award nominations** including winner of the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Award at the 2019 Highways Awards

- ✓ **Robustly managed and resourced**
- ✓ **Sharing best practice**



“The vast majority of local residents are positive about companies coordinating roadworks. At least **nine in ten** residents agree that it is a good idea, the approach of coordinating roadworks at the same time should be used elsewhere, and coordinating roadworks has reduced disruption to local residents.”

GLA Croydon research report

Mitigating the dangers of Carbon Monoxide (CO)



This year, we surveyed **139** of our front-line engineers about CO in customers' homes, and asked what more we could do to address this issue.

A priority issue was erroneous call-outs due to faulty alarms or dead batteries. We shared our survey results at our CO expert roundtables and stakeholders supported a focus on prevention and development of our

collaborative approach.

As a result, we have produced **Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarm sound videos** that help customers understand what the different sounds CO alarms make and what they mean, such as the difference between CO being detected and a low-battery warning. We have started development of a **first-of-its-kind** 'spoken warning' CO alarm, that will broadcast pre-recorded messages explaining exactly what the customer is required to do.

Working with schools and school children is essential if we are to establish a shared CO awareness culture in the future. Last year we reached over **3,780** pupils, engaging them through Gas Safety and CO awareness talks in **12** schools.

We supported the **Junior Citizen Child Safety Event**, to raise awareness for children in year 6 of potential threats and dangers in a fun, interactive and enjoyable way. The two-week program of activity was supported by **21** SGN staff and attended by **947** pupils from **18** schools.

Our ongoing cross-GDN work on CO awareness has included sharing messaging on the Bounty app and online newsletter to reach new and expectant parents. During November our article was viewed **9,440** times, clicked **435** times and shared **127** times. Our billboard advertising campaign is raising CO awareness among road users - our two billboards in Southampton and Chatham are passed by **203,000** and **329,000** cars per week respectively.

- ✓ **Innovative**
- ✓ **Sharing best practice**

Contact us

If you'd like to be part of the conversation to ensure your views count or if you have any questions on our stakeholder engagement activities please get in touch.



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