

Making a Difference

Our strategies and outputs for consumer vulnerability

Ofgem Electricity Distribution Stakeholder Engagement
and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive Scheme
Part Three

Grocery Service

“It’s a marvellous idea. I feel confident now to go out as I don’t have to struggle.”



**SP ENERGY
NETWORKS**

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Priority Services Support

“SP Energy Networks were brilliant and I’m very satisfied. I told them about my child as she is sick and needs hot water and the person on the phone made a note of it and got someone to come out straight away. I even got a follow up call later on in the evening to ensure everything was alright.”

Energy Efficiency

“Home Energy Scotland delivered a new boiler, radiators, room thermostat, hot water tank jacket and smoke alarms worth over £4,000 to one customer in Biggar.”

Fire Safety Advice

“It’s been great as I did not know where to go to get help before. I am very pleased at how easy it was to contact SPEN and for the help received from Merseyside Fire & Rescue.”

Introduction

'I believe our customers are the most important aspect of our business, after all, they're the reason we're here.'

Customers are a strong temperature check on our efficiency and ultimately pay our wages. That's why I've made certain our business has our customers at its heart. Alongside stakeholders and experts, customers shape our strategy and actions, which are then benchmarked against the best in class and tested through external accreditation and assessment. I have made sure our business places itself at the centre of the communities we serve and supports all customers in particular those who are vulnerable. Because keeping the lights on, is just part of what we do.'



Frank Mitchell
CEO of SP Energy Networks

Our Strategy and Priorities for 2016/17

Our customers, stakeholders and experts have given us 2 clear priorities:

1. Do the basics well by supporting customers when their power is off.
2. Use our unique position to bring support to our communities with practical help.

We took on board last year's feedback and worked with our stakeholders, experts and customers to build on our established framework to improve it. (Our strategy in full can be seen in part 1 pages 10 and 11). We have achieved a lot this year – 30 outputs in total.

"Winners – for their outstanding approach to supporting vulnerable customers which goes far above and beyond regulatory requirements."

Utility Week Awards 2016

Our 4 key areas of focus for 2016/2017

01

Further broadening our understanding of our customer base with regard to vulnerability.

02

Widening our partnership network to deliver Support Services to every postcode in our licence areas.

03

Better understanding the gaps in our customer data for all 3.5m customers.

04

Setting clear targets & adapting our strategy as a result of outputs and feedback.

Some of our key achievements this year



Broadened our
Social Indicator Mapping



Conducted research on all
vulnerability types
in our customer base



Identified gaps in our
PSR & Partnerships
and developed plans to close them



Expanded our network to
130 local partners
now delivering 10 Support Services



Delivered benefits to customers through our
Support Services of £116k



Increased number of customers on our
Priority Services Register by 38%



1st for Utilities
in ICS Benchmarking and
22nd across all UK service sectors



Achieved BSI Accreditation
in vulnerability



Won Utility Week Award
in Customer Care for our Support Services and vulnerable Partnerships

We're more than heat and light

We realise every customer is different. What affects one, may be just part of the story for someone else. So we have a flexible approach to delivering support, to ensure customers receive services that really make a difference to their lives.

What makes someone vulnerable? Is it health problems or old age? Maybe they are feeling isolated or anxious? Perhaps they just need a little extra help to get them through a tricky patch.

Strategy shaped by experts

Our strategy has been shaped by our customers, stakeholders, vulnerability experts and staff. There's a clear line of sight and ownership from our CEO right through the organisation and embedded into staff pay through performance management.

Our robust governance framework makes sure our strategy is not only delivered but is continuously adapted as new research, feedback and outputs emerge.

Our Simple Aim

Our aim is to get the basics right. That means supporting customers during a power cut, particularly those who need us most. But we do much more. We believe we're uniquely placed to serve our communities in a much broader way.

Through continuous engagement with our stakeholders, social experts and customers, our priorities are clear:

01

Do the basics well by supporting customers when their power is off.

02

Use our unique position to bring support to our communities with practical help.

We have used our unique position to develop free services across our network, delivering real and practical support for our customers based on what they tell us they need most. Some services are energy related, others are those every day extras – like help with the shopping or someone to chat to – that make a big difference to customers' lives.

We work in partnership with a variety of organisations to develop services in areas where they're most needed and then roll them out to our full customer base.

Because they're free and available in every area, customers have the power to choose the extra help that will mean most to them.

Our Governance Framework

We have a Governance Framework that keeps us on track. We continuously adapt our Strategy based on feedback and what works to make sure we deliver our outputs.

Strategic Stakeholder Panels

Social Working Group

Industry Working Groups

Vulnerability Strategy Review

Internal Stakeholder Action Group

Monthly Exec & Senior Management Reviews

Weekly Operational Reviews



Outcomes:

- Support Services delivered to customers based on the things they tell us they need
- An informed strategy continuously adapted based on what works.



Dementia Support

"SPEN have been a great help linking me with Alzheimer Scotland to give me support and someone to talk to when I need it."

Knowing our audience – Being broad and inclusive

We support our 3.5m customers by knowing what we are trying to tackle. We have developed an understanding of the nature, scale and distribution of different types of household vulnerability across our areas.

Reviewed

11 customer groups
15 vulnerability groups
66 vulnerability indicators

Social indicator mapping

Our social indicator mapping has been effective in the past. But following feedback last year we went further. We commissioned independent mapping from The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE). It sought to integrate Ofgem's definition of vulnerability and recent Priority Services Register (PSR) changes, with our own strategy and approach.

We now understand:

The vulnerability ranking of our strategic assets for investment decisions.

Which areas have the highest numbers eligible to benefit from joining our PSR, and how that compares with those already signed up.

Which communities are most susceptible to a power cut at home, and the impact.

How resilient our communities are in vulnerable situations.

The location of key sites such as hospitals and other facilities which support vulnerable groups.

How our customer base is made up: detailed data on households and customer types.

Asking the people who matter: Feedback and research

We carry out extensive research to ensure our strategy is based on real feedback from customers and the organisations which support them.

This year we engaged an independent research company, which used our social indicator mapping & obtained feedback across all vulnerable categories.

Research involved these 11 customer groups

Elderly

Ethnic Minorities

Carers

Financially Deprived

Energy Inefficient Homes

Deaf Customers

Socially Isolated
(inc. communities with no transport)

Ill Health

Disabled/Limited Movement

Mental Health

Blind Customers

We wanted to understand:

- What day to day support customer's need
- What would make a difference in their lives
- The value – financial or otherwise – they'd place on particular services
- How they're able to access services and information.

We take regular feedback from our wider stakeholders to get an external view of our business to make sure we stay on the right track. In addition to this we engage with our staff to give them feedback on how things are going and get feedback from them on how processes could be improved. We have vulnerability champions in each of our 11 Districts to help support processes and drive continuous improvement.

Customer data: Staying up to date

We keep our customer data up to date by contacting every customer on our PSR every two years. We have now checked the data of 100% of customers on our PSR for two or more years.

- As well as this, we have checked customer data on every call – this year we received 570k calls
- We check customer data when we conduct planned works – 100k customers per year.

Because we know customers don't always respond, during 2016/2017 we've been working with an external agency reviewing the information related to our 3.5m customers, so we can better understand where the gaps in our data might be compared with external data sources.

Our data review has included:

- Telephone Numbers
- Address Quality
- Deceased Data
- Customers moving home
- e-mail addresses.

Keeping records up to date is important. We have embarked on a programme of work to update and maintain our records in 2017.

As a result we have enhanced the way we prioritise our asset investments and target low resilience communities.

Research: Passing it on

Many charities and stakeholders can't carry out the same intensive research as we can. So we shared our data – that way we all get the most value from our research. Data has been shared with 25 organisations to date.

Outcomes:

- 100% of customers on PSR for two years plus have been checked
- Broad social indicator mapping complete
- Gap analysis completed on PSR
- Embarked on an external programme to close and maintain our data
- Research completed on all vulnerability types and a plan in place to close the gaps in our services
- Enhanced asset investment prioritisation
- Targeted low resilience communities.



Supporting our Priority Service Register Customers: From making a difference... to making the tea

Our frontline staff work hard to make a positive difference to customers' lives whether over the phone or face to face – from keeping them informed, to sharing a cup of tea.

Supporting those in need: Our bread and butter

We go over and above to look after our customers, but we don't forget the basics either.

We have 619,217 customers on our Priority Services Register (PSR). That's 18% of our total customer base. It's also an increase of over 169,463 customers this year – that's a 38% increase on last year.

Our 'bread and butter' role is to ensure vulnerable customers are registered and proactively supported. Although our coverage has increased significantly this year for us it's not about the number, it's about making sure we reach everyone who needs us and getting them the right help – particularly if the lights do go out.

The social mapping we've carried out this year with The Centre for Sustainable Energy is helping to make sure we reach everyone who needs help.

We make a point of asking customers about their needs during every call. If there's a fault, we proactively contact PSR customers to provide information and support and continue to do this at least every 3 hours or more frequently if the customer wishes.

Field teams visit customers at home, offering a helping hand. Along with our contractors, they contact customers before planned works to talk it through - face to face. That's a chance to ensure our customer information and PSR data is accurate, to sign new vulnerable customers to the register, and to make arrangements for any support they may need.

Priority Services Support

"A chap came to the door to say he had a generator if I had no water to have a cup of tea. I was impressed, for somebody older on their own... I thought it was a brilliant idea. I was really impressed."

When work has to be done, we have someone on hand to ensure everything goes smoothly, deliver support – even help make a cup of tea.



Outcomes:

- 169,463 new PSR customers
- 975 hot meals provided to vulnerable customers
- 1094 proactive calls made.



Power down: How we support vulnerable customers on our Priority Service Register

Welcome Pack

Sent to new PSR customers so they know what to expect from us and tell them about our services.

Proactive & Ongoing Contact

Updating customers at least every 3 hours in a power cut.

Customer Service On Site

Our nominated person on site process means that there is always someone to support customers.

2 Year Information Check

To confirm customer data and tell them about our services.

Vulnerable Packs

Issued during power cuts and storms. Includes an analogue phone.

Hot Food & Hotels

Provided for customers in prolonged outages and significant events. We extend this to **all** customers after 48 hours.

Dedicated Number

Our calls are answered in an average of 6 seconds. In storms & significant events we have a dedicated welfare line for PSR customers.

Resilience Partners

Providing additional services such as social care support, opening community buildings, catering vans and emotional support.

Generators

Provided for vulnerable customers to minimise impact during a power cut and planned works.

Provided 100% of vulnerable customers with a generator if requested on our proactive contacts.

Accessibility

A range of services to improve accessibility such as:

- Large print information
- Information in braille
- Translation services
- Text relay.

Short Term Vulnerability

Customers can register with us for support for a specific period of time.

Being Safe

Customers can request a password from us to safeguard against bogus callers.

First DNO to offer new LED Power Cut Safety Bulbs to keep the lights on during a power cut. We made these available to our customers in 2017.



Reaching out: Support Services

We operate referral services that provide practical support delivered through 130 partners and based on things customers tell us they need.

Tackling need: Delivering the right support

We know customers are all individual with different preferences, experiences and requirements. Customers may fit into a vulnerability category but the needs of customers in the same category may be very different. Someone who's a little frail might need help with their weekly shopping, or be lonely and in need of a friend. Perhaps a customer with learning difficulties may need us to take more time with them when they call us.

Our frontline staff are trained to recognise the subtle differences in each customers' needs. By using data, we can drill down to find the things to tackle, and by talking to consumer groups we can pinpoint the services they need and find partnerships to help make it happen.

Getting it right: Choosing partners and services

Our customers, expert organisations and stakeholders shape the partnerships we build and the services we develop. We partner with trusted organisations which deliver funded services locally and bring a wide range of services together for our customers.

We track what works and what doesn't. We learn from results and feedback, and adapt partnerships and services based on what we find out.

By using assessment criteria at the outset we ensure new services fit our strategy.



How we make a difference

The 10 free services available to our customers are:

- ✓ **Help in a power cut through our PSR**
General advice on registering for PSR and support during a power cut.
- ✓ **Maximising Income**
Making sure customers are receiving everything that they are entitled to.
- ✓ **Finding a friend**
Befriending services for those who are lonely and in need of a friend.
- ✓ **Help for those with Dementia**
Personalised home visits and support for sufferers and their families.
- ✓ **Staying safe at home**
Home fire safety visits to provide advice and equipment.
- ✓ **Debt Advice**
Help and support to get customers back on their feet if they find themselves struggling with money issues.
- ✓ **Help with weekly shop**
Not only help with the shopping, but also help to put it away.
- ✓ **Getting onto the best tariff**
Advice on the cheapest tariff and help through the switching process.
- ✓ **Energy Efficiency Advice**
Providing advice on keeping warm at home.
- ✓ **Friendship and Hot meals**
Local neighbours providing a hot meal and company to those that need it most.

Befriending Services

"I'm very pleased as I was worried as if I did not start to meet people and get out and about, I would get more depressed. This way I can go to a meeting every Tuesday on the local handy bus which takes my OAP pass, so it's free to go. I was at the Christmas party and got 2 presents, you're never too old for Santa."

Getting support: Made easy

We make it easy for our customers to benefit from our extra support

Our dedicated Support Services line is manned by experienced staff trained to help and understand their needs. Customers relax while we do the organising, and we keep in touch with them and our partners to ensure things are going well. Their feedback is important.

Our partners and other stakeholders promote our services through their own network and customer interactions.

Making connections: Going the extra mile

Some customers might ask for help, others might not even realise they should.

By forging connections with partners at ground level in communities which our data mapping has shown are most in need, we can reach both kinds of customer.

We work with our partners at local level to develop a range of free services for customers – from providing help with the weekly shop, to practical energy efficiency advice.

We expanded the services we offer this year to cover our entire customer base going from a network of 10 partners to 130 to make sure every customer in every postcode can benefit from the same services.

Because services are developed using feedback from customers who tell us what they really need, we know they make a genuine difference.

Outcomes:

- 130 partners delivering 10 free Support Services for customers in every area
- Winners of the Utility Week Award for our Support Services
- 304 customers helped since Oct 2016
- £116k value of benefits delivered for customers
- Average saving per customer £381
- SPEN costs to operate service is £37k.



Reaching out: Being inventive

We know one size doesn't fit all. So we have used different and imaginative tactics to connect with customers who may be harder to reach.

Customer
reach

600



Network Natter

Enduring

Our Network Natter sessions are face to face events in local communities which target specific groups. They help us establish partnerships, build networks and spread the word.

What we learned: Network Natters is a great way to kickstart a network of partners and find out what services are available in an area. Communities often have innovative schemes which may not be widely known – we drill down to see what's available, and see what fits with the things customers say they want. We then replicate these services across all of our areas. Sessions might not drive large numbers of referrals but they are the foundation stone of building new networks.

Outcomes:

- 6 events held
- 600 customers attended
- Network Natter session has achieved over 90% PSR Sign Up rate
- £2.32 benefit for every £1 spent by SPEN.



Tariff Check

"My house was cold, I feel overwhelmed sometimes following the death of my husband. Someone visited to check my tariff and refer me to Warmer Homes Scotland. The house is much warmer now."

Befriending Service

"Yesterday I went to a tea dance and was looked after very well and will be going back on the last Wednesday of every month. I am fair pleased. There is a tea dance on the day before my birthday. I had no idea this was on my doorstep. I am very grateful for SPEN organising."

Customer
reach

4,000



Jab and Jabber

New

We know not all customers will come to us for help. There are some we need to find. We also need to raise awareness of what we do with frontline services, who support vulnerable customers every day. Annual flu jab sessions at GP surgeries are a good place to promote our PSR and Support Services to those who may be harder to reach. Around 4,000 patients, frontline health professionals and carers attended Jab and Jabber and we had a 10% uplift on PSR sign ups on the days of the Flu Jab Clinics.

What we learned: Jab and jabber is a great opportunity to raise awareness of SP Energy Networks, and our PSR amongst patients and frontline health professionals. Flu jab appointment times are approximately 2 minutes long and the clinics are heavily attended. So while we successfully encouraged new customers to sign up to our PSR, sign up volumes to the Support Services was lower as we did not have enough time to explain everything without holding up the clinics. We'll promote our referrals at future events but our primary focus will be on promoting our Priority Services Register through Jab and Jabber.

Outcomes:

- 4 days of flu jab clinics
- 3 Doctors surgeries targeted
- Over 4,000 patients and frontline health professionals
- Achieve average sign up rate of 10% to PSR on the day
- £1.78 benefit for every £1 spent by SPEN.



Awareness: Spreading the word

As well as our national advertising campaign described on Page 6, Part 2, we have adapted our PSR and Support Services awareness strategy to reach vulnerable customers and those who support them.



Shopping Malls

Reach 150,000 customers

Shopping malls and town centres are busy places. We gave shoppers a unique – and memorable – view of our work, using street art to attract attention. Meanwhile, teams of fully trained staff distributed over 150,000 leaflets and promotional items during December and early January.

Taking to the Road

Reach 800 customers

Basil Volty was the name given to our mobile exhibition unit following a staff competition. It visited hotspot areas identified by our data mapping to promote our PSR and Support Services. All homes in the area received leaflets and a personal visit from a SPEN representative.

Basil Volty was placed in 8 locations – Drummole, Sandhead, Kirkcolm, Leswalk, Lochans, Port Williams, Isle of Whithorn and Garlieston.

Councils

Reach over 400,000 customers

We got our message across on council websites including included Halton, Sefton, Wirral, Wrexham and Warrington. Our targeted approach meant we appeared on key pages devoted to social care and blue badge information.

Impact on our own website

Reach 1,046 views

Sometimes you have to look close to home to make real change. Our website has been redesigned so it's easier to navigate. For the first time our pages aimed at vulnerable customers made our website's 'Top 10' hit list.

Digital Advertising

Reach 900k customers

Often it's a family member who will raise the awareness on our behalf. So we took a fresh approach to advertise our vulnerable services to those in the 40+ age range – the ones more likely to be caring and supporting parents and family members. We utilised an online tool that reaches our target audience while they carry out an internet search.

Extra help, in the bag

Reach 300,000 customers

Health issues and vulnerability often go hand in hand. Our stakeholders said that many vulnerable customers visit their GP surgery regularly and often need repeat prescriptions.

We arranged for more than 300,000 pharmacy bags to be printed for 600 pharmacies with our key messages: what to do in a power cut and how to access our Support Services.

A road well-travelled

Reach 390,000 customers

Sometimes arriving at your destination involves a different route. We realised it helps to let friends, family and carers of vulnerable people know about our PSR, so they can pass our message on. To reach them – and other vulnerable customers – we connected with local car park operators in our key areas and organised for 390,000 parking tickets to carry awareness messages for Priority Services.

First class service

Reach 1,500 homes

We took our message straight to the doormat of our most vulnerable communities. Our data mapping led us to the postcodes where the need is greatest and provided information on our Priority Services Register and our Support Services.

PSR Welcome Information & 2 Year Check

Reach over 400,000 customers

We send mail straight to customers to promote our Support Services as part of our 2 year PSR data checks, and to customers joining the register for the first time.

Planned Outage Call Backs

Reach 100k customers

We conduct call backs to customers daily as part of our operational processes. That's a chance to explain our Support Services.

Targeting Local businesses

Reach 3,000 local businesses

A full suite of materials including posters, cards, PSR and support service leaflets have been hand delivered to 3000 independent shops, businesses and food outlets.

Community Gatekeepers

Reach 7,000 premises

Packs were delivered to over 7,000 GP surgeries, pharmacies, opticians, dentists and community centres during November and December.

Politicians

Reach 205 MP's / MSP's

Politicians have material to display in their constituency.

Trusted Partners

Reach 130 new partners

Support organisations which help vulnerable customers – including our partners – receive materials to help us spread the word. Material delivered in Wales is provided in Welsh and English.



New



Expanded



Enduring

Setting targets

Any new initiative, partnership or service has to fit our strategy. We use simple assessment criteria to ensure the fit is right. We set targets at the outset and monitor progress, making sure to ask for our partners input.

In 2016/17 we set targets in 2 areas.

1. PSR customers

- To conduct targeted awareness to extend our PSR reach
- To conduct new social mapping to understand the gaps in our PSR by area.

2. Support Services

- We set a goal of replicating our 10 support services across our entire customer base by September 2016
- We set a target of achieving 30 referrals per month from October 2016 onwards for our Support Services.

Cracking the colour code

This year we have tried to develop measurement in 4 areas for both our Support Services and Priority Services Register to capture:-

1. The volume of Support Services and PSR sign ups being requested from our customers
2. The type of Support Service being requested
3. The value being delivered to our customers
4. How customers found out about the Support Service or PSR.

What we have learned: Whilst we have been able to capture volume, type and value and record this as a matter of daily routine now, we have struggled to accurately capture how customers found out about our services. Sometimes our customers are not sure because they may have been referred to us via a friend or family member or simply don't remember.

As a result: We have embarked on an IT project delivering in 2017 to enhance our customer database giving us the ability to capture the channel for our PSR sign ups – whether that be through routes such as our Awareness Campaigns, events or notification from a Supplier. As our Support Services come directly into our dedicated team we have taken steps to colour code our leaflets so our staff can simply ask the colour.

Closing the Gaps

Research carried out on our 11 vulnerability categories representing our customer base told us that our Support Services are comprehensive.

Customers told us that potentially they may find the following services useful:

1. Cleaning
2. Gardening
3. Household help such as making beds
4. Education in digital skills.

In 2017, we will see to look into these possibilities and see how we can close this gap.

Closing the Gaps in our PSR

To identify potential gaps in our Priority Services Register, our social indicator mapping compared customers on our register with national statistics.

National statistics are available by area for age, physical disabilities/restrictions and foreign language. These categories cover 65% of customers on our register. By comparing them with our PSR coverage, we now have maps to show where we have the biggest gaps.

National data is not available **by area** for the remaining 35% of the categories made up on our register. However during 2017 we will obtain data for the UK average, and use it to compare against our PSR and use to target against our campaigns.

Making sure we don't make our customers more vulnerable

We don't want to place our customers in situations that might make them more vulnerable. So we've focused on reducing the duration and frequency of power cuts. Since 2013 we have achieved:

- 56% reduction in number of PSR customers impacted by a power cut lasting more than 9 hours
- 31% reduction in number of PSR customers impacted by a power cut lasting more than 6 hours
- 19% reduction in number of customers who have experienced more than 2 power cuts in 12 months.

Over 95%

of customers are scoring Very Good or Excellent for the services we provide

Recognising Vulnerability can change or be short term

Customers' needs change over time. Sometimes they need a little more support at certain times, such as post-surgery, bereavement or pregnancy. This year we have 928 customers recorded on our systems with a temporary vulnerability. SPEN introduced a process in 2014/15 to help customers with short term needs. An industry change was agreed with all DNOs and will be implemented in June 2017. SPEN's initiative is now well established ahead of this industry change.

Embedded in our business

Support for vulnerable customers is embedded in our core processes such as Power Cuts, Planned Investment on our network and Planned Maintenance of our assets. It also shapes our overall strategy and customer service.

Keeping track of our strategy

Our quarterly governance meetings review defined criteria, helping us understand how our strategy is working and how it could be adapted.

- Outputs are tracked on a monthly scorecard
- Monthly reports are received from partners detailing outputs
- Calls are made to every customer on delivery of their Support Service to check satisfaction and the impact the service is having
- Decisions at our quarterly governance meetings are formally logged and strategy adapted as a result.

Outcomes:

- PSR reach extended by 169k customers
- Broad social indicator mapping completed
- 10 services replicated in every post code
- 50 referrals per month achieved from October 2016
- 928 customers with temporary vulnerabilities recorded on our system.



Our people, quality and how we share

The success or failure of our strategy comes down to our people. Our teams are passionate, take ownership and go above and beyond expectation. Our journey is ongoing, as needs and expectations change, we adapt and respond.

Training

Our training makes sure all staff – from contact teams, field staff to contractors as well as managers – have the right tools to recognise and support customers, particularly those who are vulnerable. Training has been shaped by vulnerability experts and benchmarked against other organisations facing similar challenges.

We use materials that enhance our training programme. Such as an award-winning video made by disabled people in collaboration with Legal & General, which is now included in our training, research and IT improvements.

Our ongoing programme in customer service and vulnerability qualifications with the Institute of Customer Service is rolling out across our business. It ensures customer service and vulnerability has equal importance as engineering in our organisation and ensures we are setting the right standard.

News of the day

When we communicate effectively, everyone stays up to date. We can exchange knowledge and share successes.

We produced an awareness video which has been shared across the business and our internal social media system keeps everyone informed of our customer vulnerability activities. Staff share stories and experiences – so we learn from each other.

We have for many years managed an online community to get quick feedback from our customers, this has been further enhanced this year into a stakeholder online community with a specific emphasis on Social Stakeholders and Partners. This will deploy in 2017 and will be used to communicate across our entire vulnerability network, making it easy to talk to support partners.

Benchmarking: On the right track

We want to know how we're doing. So in July 2016 we undertook a business benchmarking exercise with the Institute of Customer Service. We checked our UK Customer Satisfaction Index – the UK's largest cross-sector customer benchmark study – against other service organisations.

We found:

Our overall score of 82.9 exceeded the UK average of 77.4.

We achieved **1st place** among all ranked utilities – the average UK utility score is 73.3.

And we're equal 22nd, and in the upper quartile of the top 100 UK index. That puts us above companies like Apple (29th) and Mercedes-Benz (37th).

Sure of our quality

We deliver to a high standard – that's shown by our awards and accreditations.

We achieved:

Independent Review of our stakeholder engagement strategy against AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard by DNV GL completed 5 years running.

Achieved BSI Accreditation in Vulnerability.

Shortlisted for the ICS Collaboration Award in 2017.

Winner of the Utility Week Award for our Support Services and Vulnerability Partnerships in 2016 – recognised as going above and beyond other companies.

Training our staff and managers to a high standard and achieving Institute of Customer Service qualifications.

Outcomes:

- Consumer Vulnerability training rolled out to 1584 Field Staff and Contractors
- ICS Benchmarked SP Energy Networks 22nd in the UK and 1st against all utilities
- 3 Data Sharing Agreements in place with GDNs and Home Energy Scotland.



Working together: Sharing data

Data sharing means we can all target vulnerable customers better.

We have three data Sharing Agreements in place covering two GDNs and Home Energy Scotland and to date 600 referrals have been sent and received.

Our new Data Sharing Agreement with Home Energy Scotland meant we were first to use their new online portal, enabling us to refer straight to them and monitor the outcomes via online reports.

Working together: Our energy colleagues

Being active and getting our voice heard means we can raise more awareness of what we do.

We took part in the Scottish Government's Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum, to highlight our consumer vulnerability programme, and to talk about challenges surrounding sharing data related to vulnerable customers.

In terms of working with other DNOs, we attend all Consumer Vulnerability Working Groups and also took part in the Joint DNO Conference hosted by National Energy Action in March.

Working together: Going further

We wanted to share best practice and experiences. So in 2016 we organised a Scottish Cross Utilities Forum. Over three sessions we met representatives from Scottish Water and SGN to discuss customer experience, planned works and customer vulnerability.

We agreed to share our social indicator mapping and are now reviewing a customer experience analytics tool used by one of the companies.

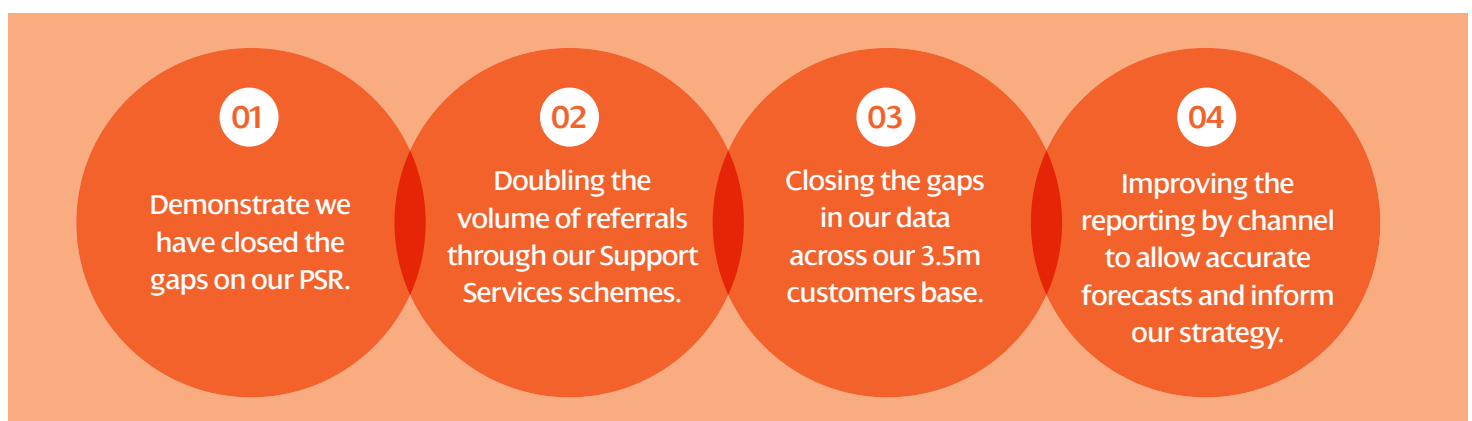
We also joined North Wales Financial Capability Forum where we have raised awareness of our Support Services and our PSR and built local support partners in this area.

Showing results

The work we do needs to bring positive change for customers, whether that's financial, practical or something that improves their lives. A table of our outputs for this year can be seen below:-



What's Next: Our targets in 2017







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