

Stakeholder Engagement Incentive Submission

2017-18



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVE SUBMISSION 2017/18

PART ONE

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INTRODUCTION

Our focus this year has been to extend our reach and maximise our stakeholder outcomes, building on the approach and initiatives of previous years. We have also refocused our delivery programme to include enhanced engagement, so a broad range of stakeholder and consumer voices will be heard and reflected in our current and GD2 business plans.

Our approach is multi-channelled and at its core is making sure our business priorities align with those of our stakeholders and that their input influences our decisions. Our stakeholders at Critical Friends Panel and regional workshops show that their top priorities are still raising awareness of carbon monoxide and supporting people in vulnerable situations. To support our delivery we have actively developed key partnerships that are really helping us deliver for these important stakeholder groups. I am really proud that we have again **received verification for our whole business under the British Standard for Inclusive Service Provision this year**, a clear independent demonstration of our commitment to delivering and transforming our services for vulnerable customers.

Our submission demonstrates how our partnerships are really showing positive outcomes for stakeholders and delivering for all the organisations with whom we work. An example of the results they're delivering is a **62% increase on people added to the Priority Services Register**. We believe this is a highly successful template for future partnerships – one that we can share with gas distribution networks (GDNs) and other utilities.

Partnerships and collaborative working are a key focus for us, enabling greater stakeholder and consumer access and helping us concentrate on delivering what we do best. To support colleagues, we've rolled out stakeholder engagement toolkits to managers and regularly talk about stakeholder engagement at colleague roadshows across our area.

As part of our annual work plan, **we've carried out more stakeholder mapping sessions** which have again delivered some good results, such as with our major gas users – an important group of stakeholders who make up 1% of our gas consumers but use 48% of the gas we distribute. The exercise also highlighted there are groups with whom we need to still improve our engagement, such as shippers. We are engaging with them on a collaborative basis alongside other GDNs and National Grid Gas Transmission, as part of a new Energy Networks Association collaborative engagement working group that Wales & West Utilities chairs.

A new partnership this year with the Federation of Small Businesses has aimed to improve engagement with stakeholders such as small/medium-sized businesses. We've **gained access to around 25,000 of its members** and are not only responding to their demand for more communication on our work plans but also supporting them with their procurement challenges. We've also **invested more resources to increase our reach with national and local politicians**, raising more awareness of our role – particularly in the wider energy industry.

As part of our GD2 engagement, **we've initiated a mass consumer engagement programme** to engage gas consumers and other stakeholders across our region. This consists of a multi-media, multi-channel programme that asks people to fill in a short, relevant survey that will help us plan for the future more effectively and provide them with the services they tell us they value – at the best value for money cost.

Our 'Let's connect' campaign sees us for the first time running a TV advert¹ which, alongside a social media marketing campaign, bus advertising and engagement with people at community shows in our area, will help us gain the views of

many thousands of our stakeholders and customers. There's more on this in Part One of this submission.

As our engagement focus increases, with recruitment under way for our new Customer Engagement Group to make sure we reflect consumers' voices in all our business planning, we want to show excellent service delivery is at the heart of what we do. Stakeholders tell us that our focus on delivering great service should remain a priority and **our Distinction-level ServiceMark from the Institute of Customer Service** not only tells us that we are getting this right, but helps us to benchmark our performance outside of our sector. As with any other commercial business – and monopoly utilities are no exception – stakeholders should and do have the right to shape the services we provide. Only by listening to them, gaining their trust and having them tell us we are delivering what they want, will we really be able to claim we are successful.

Yours sincerely,



Graham Edwards Chief Executive



¹ <https://www.facebook.com/wwutilities/videos/1673786706038034/>

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Our stakeholder engagement strategy is embedded in our business, defining our approach to engagement and how stakeholder feedback informs business planning to improve our performance. A mature strategy and delivery programme is essential in the run-up to developing our GD2 business plan.

To support GD1 and GD2 business plan development, our 2018 programme focuses on enhanced engagement and a public consultation programme, encompassing a broad reach of stakeholders, including hard-to-reach stakeholders and customers.

Our engagement strategy complements our business strategy, ensuring a clear route to stakeholder feedback-focused outcomes, driving strategic and operational improvements. Our strategy supports our business aims and stakeholder goals. It:

- Minimises negative and maximises positive reputational impact and stakeholder outcomes, through a multi-channel approach to engagement
- Increases our engagement reach by creating and developing strategic partnerships to access hard-to-reach stakeholders and customers
- Encourages open and honest dialogue with stakeholders, understanding they have different motivations
- Promotes the benefits good stakeholder engagement gives to overall business success
- Aligns with our business priorities and values

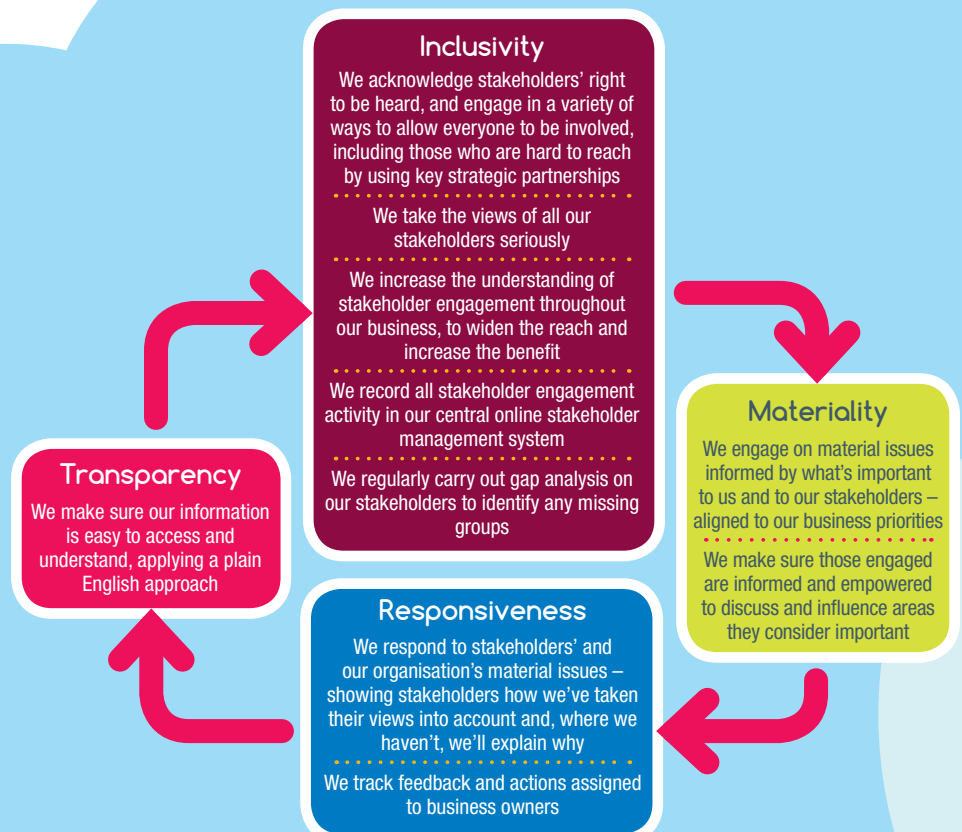
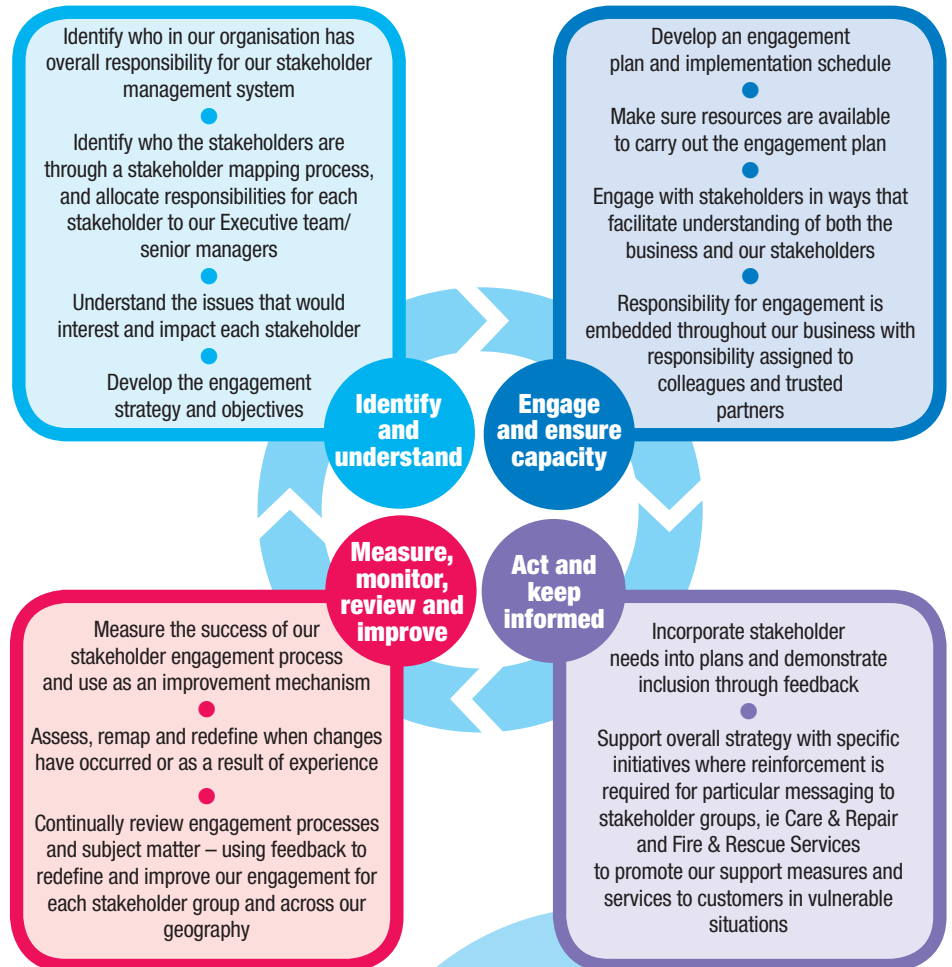
Our promise

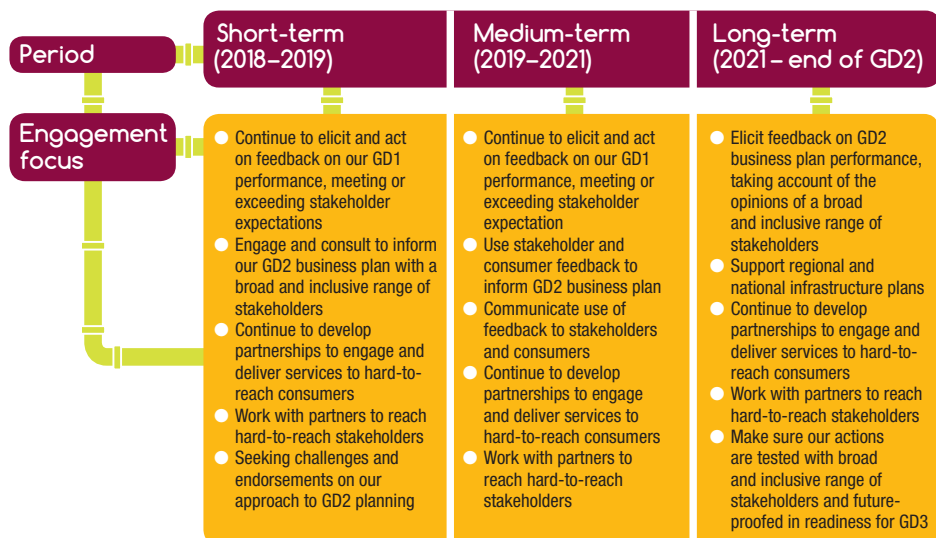
We proactively engage with our stakeholders using the most appropriate channels. We listen to and act on their feedback to make sure we continue to deliver outstanding levels of gas safety, reliability and customer service so we're trusted and valued by the millions of people we serve every day.

Framework

Engagement is driven by our Executive team, but 'owned' and delivered by trained and experienced colleagues across our business – creating a 'virtuous circle' (as demonstrated above right).

Every year, our operational stakeholder engagement strategy is reviewed by our Executive team and refined to make sure it's still delivering valuable outcomes for stakeholders and our business, and is aligned to AccountAbility's Stakeholder Engagement Standard, AA1000SES. Our engagement principles (right) are based on AA1000APS and guide our engagement.





Our priorities and values



Stakeholder priorities align with our business priorities and, so we can maintain focus and resource appropriately, we've created short, medium and long-term goals (see above):

- Short-term (2018 – 2019)
- Medium-term (2019 – 2021)
- Long-term (2021 – end of GD2)

GD2 engagement

In 2018, our enhanced engagement activities are a continuation of current engagement and focusing on three areas:

- Using existing customer and stakeholder data, feedback and engagement
- Increasing qualitative engagement across the region we serve:
 - A series of **seven local community workshops**, including topic-specific and stakeholder-specific sessions
 - Consumer opinion research, including focus groups
- A quantitative engagement programme, using a multi-channel approach and strong call to action to gain stakeholder feedback – learning from best practice in the water industry

We've discussed our enhanced engagement programme with our Critical Friends Panel (CFP), which agreed both our approach to engagement and analysis of the results.

Stakeholder feedback will be key in shaping our GD2 business plan and gaining stakeholder and consumer legitimacy for the impact we have

on gas bills. Our Customer Engagement Group (being recruited) will also scrutinise our full GD2 engagement programme, checking feedback is reflected through our business plan.

Robust governance is essential to ensure effective engagement and use of feedback (more information on page 4). Our GD2 engagement is bound by our usual governance process.

We're ensuring effective use of new and existing data sources. We've carried out a data mining exercise and are reviewing historical and current customer and stakeholder feedback to use in trend profiling, giving more perspective to new feedback.

To provide lots of opportunities for people to give us their views, we've launched a multi-layered consultation campaign. We're targeting a broad range of people and hosting an online survey – via a website portal and Facebook Messenger Chat Bot. We're also targeting key stakeholders with a series of workshops and events.

During 2018/19, we're holding more workshops across our region (seven), and increasing research and focus groups to ensure a broad stakeholder reach. We're continuing to invite local councils, businesses, housing associations, politicians, charities and other organisations to come and join us again, this year.

Our consultation campaign is focused on the simple message 'Let's connect'.

We've developed an online portal to host our consumer survey:
www.pipeuponline.co.uk

To engage with as many people as we can, we're supporting the consultation with an advertising campaign called 'Connected to You'. Our TV advert aired in May and it tells people that at Wales & West Utilities we're about more than just connecting pipes; we connect people and help them connect with each other – our services are vital and we're very proud to deliver them.

We also have bus liner, newspaper, digital and social media advertising linked to the campaign.

We're including appropriate messaging about our campaign on existing customer and stakeholder communications, such as emails, letters, street works signs and on our vehicles.

We're **engaging more than 1,400 of our colleagues** with a comprehensive campaign using all our internal communications channels so they can help drive customers to our survey. Our TV advert features one of our colleagues' family and an appearance by one of our engineers.

We're boosting our community presence, by attending four community events – the Royal Bath & West Show, the Royal Cornwall Show, the Royal Welsh Show and the National Eisteddfod – that will **help us potentially reach more than 645,000 people** across our area.

Through partnerships with Care & Repair and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), we're surveying case workers and members respectively to gain valuable insight into vulnerability and small/medium-sized businesses, hard-to-reach consumers and stakeholders. We're also engaging with national stakeholders – national organisations, government, shippers and so on, collaboratively, with National Grid Gas Transmission and the other gas networks – we chair the working group.

We'll carefully review the new and existing feedback and, using external expertise, analyse the results using a weighted system to make sure the feedback we incorporate in our GD2 business plan is robust and of the utmost integrity.

POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

Partner strategy

Developing strategic partnerships is a key element of our engagement strategy and has been a major focus during 2017/18. Our strategy is to create and develop partnerships that help us engage with hard-to-reach customers and stakeholders and to help us deliver priority services to people in vulnerable situations. We're focusing on organisations with a network of delivery points that can overcome regional differences and provide more bespoke, localised services.

Achievements and new partnerships

During 2016/17, we focused on creating new partnerships to support both engagement with and

delivery of stakeholder outcomes. During 2017/18 we've embedded those partnerships. Our strategic partnerships include Care & Repair and Fire & Rescue Services. In their daily work, our partners provide information on carbon monoxide (CO), Locking Cooker Valves (LCVs), Priority Services Register (PSR) and our Warm Home Assistance scheme – taking a holistic approach. Through our partnership with the Fire & Rescue Services, we attend the Royal Welsh and Bath & West Shows at no cost to help raise CO gas safety awareness alongside the Fire & Rescue safety team. **These shows are attended by more than 370,000 people annually.**

We review our partnerships to identify opportunities to increase their scope and broker new ones to increase engagement with hard-to-reach stakeholders and customers. During 2017/18, **we engaged with six local Citizens Advice offices** to establish partnerships to support our mutual customers – a hard-to-reach customer demographic for us. We're developing our relationship with the FSB and engaging with these harder-to-reach stakeholders – around 25,000 members across the area we serve. We provide advance communications on our work in local communities, procurement advice and also share our innovation challenges so these businesses can get involved.

Outcomes of partnerships

Partnering with organisations who share our values helps us develop trusting partner relations and has led to our West of England Care & Repair partnership being managed by the Care & Repair team in Wales – which can more easily access these hard-to-reach stakeholders. We're also able to increase our engagement with those who directly support vulnerable people, through Care & Repair case workers, and have been offered the opportunity to carry out chaperoned interviews with a number of clients themselves to gain valuable insight from a hard-to-reach stakeholder group to feed into our GD2 business plan.

Our partners are already recognised and trusted by our stakeholders, enabling access where we couldn't normally, providing them with confidence our support measures will positively impact their wellbeing.

These effective partnerships are delivering better outcomes for our shared customer beneficiaries as well as for our business in terms of engaging with hard-to-reach customers and stakeholders and for the agencies themselves in demonstrating to government how they're working with the private sector.

Wales & West Utilities is an important partner for Care & Repair and we are delighted to be working with a like-minded organisation when it comes to looking out for vulnerable people. We look forward to building on our strong partnership and helping more vulnerable older people stay safe and warm at home.

Chris Jones, Chief Executive, Care & Repair Cymru

Partnership management

Through a key partnership with Care & Repair Cymru, which helps older people stay safely in their own homes, we've gained experience we're applying when developing other partnerships.

We've agreed simple but clear reporting lines with partners to make sure we're able to capture and report on data that matters and have robust monthly reporting requirements to support

delivery. This helps us monitor partnership effectiveness – and has developed an element of friendly competition in our partnerships with Fire & Rescue Services and between the local Care & Repair agencies.

During 2017/18, we formalised this by asking partners to sign an Agreement of Understanding to make sure our data management is in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements that came into force in 2018.

Our Partners' Pack is reviewed and honed regularly and we have an annual partner training programme in place.

GOVERNANCE

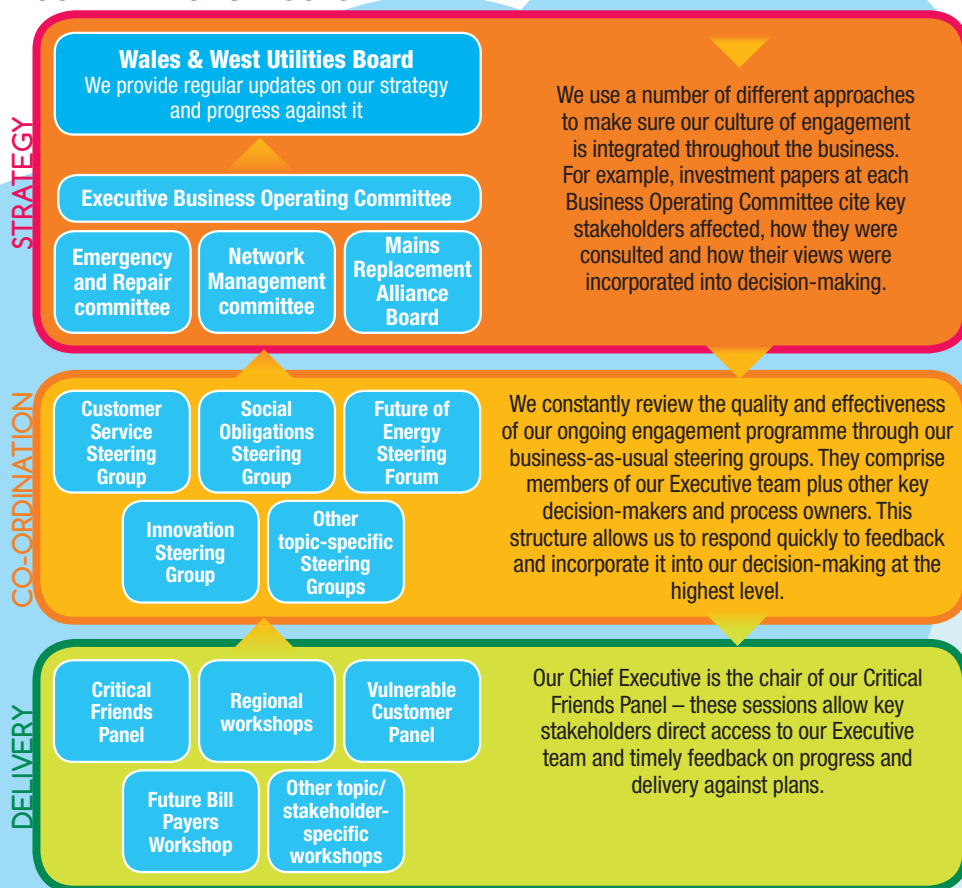
To deliver valuable outcomes for our stakeholders, it's important to embed strong governance.

Stakeholder engagement needs to be managed like any other function, with clearly defined objectives, dedicated resources, agreed timelines and budgets with senior manager buy-in and ownership – agreed at our Executive-led Steering Groups.

We've designed a simple structure (below), creating a clear line of sight, so all colleagues can understand what's expected of them, becoming fully engaged.

This helps us monitor engagement and share outcomes and outputs across our business and ensures we have appropriate processes in place to source and develop stakeholders' strategic opinions.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



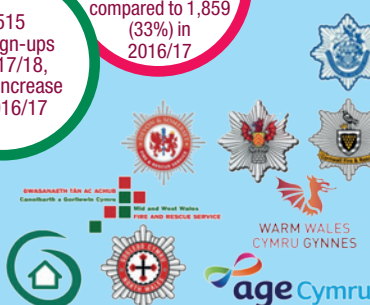
29 LCVs installed in 2017/18, increased from one in 2016/17

Awareness of our support measures among those who received our training has risen by 112%

Trained 98 caseworkers and Fire & Rescue Service personnel

4,411 (96%) alarms provided to those most affected by CO, compared to 1,859 (33%) in 2016/17

3,515 PSR sign-ups in 2017/18, a 62% increase on 2016/17



Customer feedback

Method by which input received	Example of input	Purpose of engagement undertaken	What we do with the information	Value to Wales & West Utilities and outcomes
Colleagues	Customer feedback when we're working in local communities	Comments on service provided in the home and during pipe repair and replacement schemes	Feed into Customer Service Steering Group to discuss with colleagues and build into short, medium and long-term service improvement solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We hear feedback from customers in a timely manner and can act to improve business performance and customer outcomes Overall Customer Satisfaction Score improved from 9.11 (2016/17) to 9.15 (2017/18) Five more Customer Support Officers appointed during 2017/18, taking our total to nine
Customers	Customer complaints: face to face, written, telephone, social media comments and posts	Complaints on service provided	Complaints procedures: daily Exec-led telephone call to discuss and resolve complaints	Complaints resolution improvement: 83% of complaints resolved within 24 hours of receiving them during 2017/18, a 2% increase on 2016/17

Steering groups

Steering groups are led by at least one Executive member and borne from stakeholders' priorities. To complement our Customer Service Steering Group, we **introduced two new steering groups** during 2017/18 as a result of stakeholder feedback.

Social Obligations Steering Group

During 2017/18, our regional stakeholders and CFP rated people in vulnerable situations as a rising and key business priority for us to focus on. In response, we created an Executive member-led Social Obligations Steering Group, with a Social Obligations Delivery Group comprising colleagues from CO, fuel poverty and priority customer teams to manage delivery.

This strategic change has reduced duplication of effort across the business and improved the outcomes for customers in vulnerable situations, through an increased focus on promotion and provision of support services.

Future of Energy Steering Group

To maintain focus promoting the key role we play in an integrated energy system, we set up a Future of Energy Steering Group. This Executive member-led group assess the value of engagement we're carrying out, the progress of innovation projects we're working on and the engagement plans/resources we need to produce positive outcomes.

ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

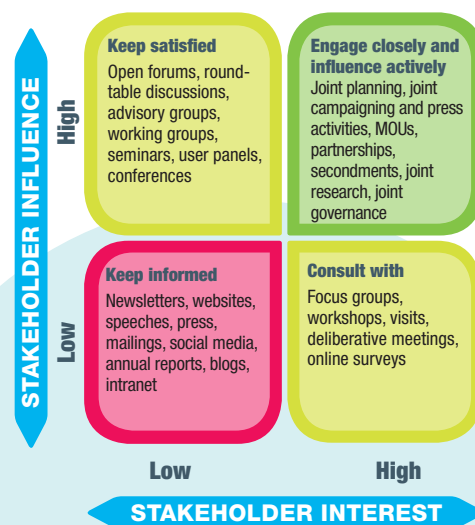
We tailor our engagement channels and language to be appropriate for the target audience – using differing methods to maximise stakeholder engagement and feedback.

Before we engage, we make sure we're clear about our objective – to avoid 'talking shops' and maximise outcomes. Our engagement plans are underpinned by our stakeholder engagement strategy.

We identify and prioritise our stakeholders in line with our business objectives. We check our assumptions internally as well as with our CFP. At our December CFP, we outlined our proposed GD2 consultation plan (page 3) and gained valuable additional input that identified opportunities to enhance our engagement by gaining access to hard-to-reach stakeholders such as small/medium-sized businesses, through our partnership with the FSB.

We **segment and map stakeholders according to their interest and influence** (right), so we focus appropriate resources on engagement.

This not only helps colleagues understand the relationship they should look to build, but also highlights the channels they can use to create maximum value.



CASE STUDY ENGAGING WITH HARD-TO-REACH STAKEHOLDERS

Shippers

Shippers are a key business stakeholder, with whom we are in contact daily as we arrange to transport their gas through our pipes, so it's important to gain their feedback on the services we provide.

During 2017/18, we issued a survey to initiate engagement about what they thought about the service we provided. Although feedback received was positive, we had a low response rate, so we need to build relationships with these hard-to-reach stakeholders. As part of GD2 engagement, we are embarking on collaborative engagement with the other gas distribution networks (GDNs) and National Grid Gas Transmission and have agreed to include shippers as part of this exercise – and seek external support to broker initial engagement.

Broad and inclusive

We aim to engage with as broad and inclusive a range of stakeholders as we can, so stakeholder database management is key to supporting this – along with our partnership approach.

We've **introduced an online stakeholder management system** to store stakeholder information efficiently, manage data in accordance with GDPR and effectively capture results of engagement. This is a long-term solution, which we believe will meet the needs of our stakeholder engagement strategy going forward, helping us to embed engagement across our business and maximise positive outcomes for our stakeholders.

Some of the features and benefits of the system:

- All stakeholders in one place
- Accessible on the go through a website and mobile app – no more waiting to get online to update the database
- Ability to document interactions – making sure information doesn't get lost or forgotten
- Follow-up action reminders – actions can be assigned to colleagues, who'll be notified by email and deadlines can be set, embedding accountability

- Automated reports – provide status updates on actions assigned to colleagues
- Ability to send mass communications – quicker and easier, segmenting data by interest group, allowing targeted communications
- Store documents related to stakeholders – helpful when a different colleague is meeting

a stakeholder who has previously engaged with us, providing insight to previous discussions, helping embed the 'Day After Report' (below) process

- Data analysis – at-a-glance overview of the stakeholder groups with whom we need more representation

During 2017/18, we commissioned external specialists to data cleanse and review our stakeholder database, which **holds more than 2,000 records**, to make sure it was not only up to date, but that it included as many different stakeholder groups as possible which will help when mapping our stakeholders prior to engagement activities.

BUILDING A CULTURE OF ENGAGEMENT

To support fully embedding stakeholder engagement, we hold colleague training workshops and discussion sessions at internal roadshows, as well as getting colleagues to support our stands at events, such as the Royal Bath & West Show and other community events where they meet stakeholders face to face to raise awareness of priorities such as CO.

Creating links between engagement and customer satisfaction scores encourages colleague stakeholder ownership. This helps create 'ambassadors' who are passionate about maintaining or exceeding existing service standards and outcomes valued by stakeholders.

Communication

We inform colleagues about our stakeholder engagement at our regional workshops, providing the presentation slides on our intranet. We then discuss engagement at our regional colleague roadshows and at head office – run by our Chief Executive and the Executive team, **attended by more than 220 colleagues**.

We film our roadshows and send viewing links to all colleagues by email and text to increase the number of people who receive our business updates.

We issue copies of our *Stakeholder Engagement Incentive Submission* annually to all senior managers, encouraging feedback, along with updates in Team Talk, our monthly team brief. This has encouraged colleagues to get involved in helping facilitate our stakeholder workshops – with **12 attending our first facilitator training workshop** in April 2018.

We take important information from our *Network Innovation Report*, Regulatory Reporting Pack and *Stakeholder Annual Report* and produce a four-page, easy-to-digest *Sharing Success* leaflet for our colleagues and stakeholders – something stakeholders at our regional workshop and CFP members said they'd like. We use this to demonstrate how stakeholder feedback is used to inform our business plans and improve performance to achieve better outcomes for stakeholders.

Stakeholder feedback is considered by colleagues as part of our annual internal Customer Service Championship Cup competition, where regional teams – made up of back office and operational colleagues – develop service improvements. One team is voted by our Executive team as winners

for their improvement initiatives, such as the new notice boards used for our mains replacement work, are trialled and rolled out across our network once the value has been proven.

Social media

Our Executive members and colleagues take part in online conversations, promoting what we're doing or to respond to stakeholders' questions (bottom of page).

Stakeholder Toolkit

To raise awareness of stakeholder engagement and in response to colleague requests for support on engagement, we created a Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit. This covers:

- Stakeholder definition
- Overview of stakeholder groups
- Tips on how to get the best outcomes from engagement
- The benefits and importance of engagement

It's been **rolled out to a cross-section of more than 55 managers** attending a conference on our GD2 consultation plans, hosted by our Chief Executive, at which there were three training sessions during the day tackling day-to-day engagement.

Included in our Toolkit is a new 'Day After Report' template, which colleagues are asked to complete in order to capture their engagement so that they can update the relevant internal stakeholder(s) –

assigning actions in the process. During 2017/18 **more than 155 'Day After Reports' were created**, and an example of a positive outcome is that the future of energy policy direction of BEIS now includes hybrids. The Toolkit is helping us provide consistent recording of engagement, which can prove difficult in a large organisation.

Insight performance dashboard

In 2014/15, we introduced Insight – a tool strategically aligned to our priorities which turns large volumes of data into easy-to-understand, trusted information on performance targets, for our managers. During 2017/18, we added new dashboards and evolved the platform, making it easier to use, more intuitive and with improved data accuracy.

Innovation days

As part of our colleague engagement programme, our Innovation Team engaged with our operational managers in a series of workshops to understand the business challenges they face daily.

This list of more than 25 challenges, including 'innovative backfill material' and 'temporary covers for excavations', was then assessed by operational senior managers and prioritised in a top 10 to investigate in more depth. **More than 45 senior managers took part**. As a result of this engagement, we created our innovation roadmap for our customers of today and tomorrow, up to 2021.

The success of this engagement has led to us introducing an 'innovation drop-in session'



Chris Clarke @chrisclarkewwu · Mar 30

Replying to @Sustainable2050

@WWUtilities and @wpduk trials of 75 @PassivSystemsHQ Smart hybrid heating systems in #Bridgend over last winter indicate a breakthrough in #heat #decarbonisation in U.K. Use renewable electricity when available, @CadentGasLtd green SNG gas when not. Report on WWU website.



Sarah Hopkins @sashop · 26 Sep 2017

2 of our @WWUtilities HR team speaking at today's @UtilityWeek #utilityhr conference - me and @beth_jones_1 #customer #engagement #talent



Steven Edwards @Stevenjwu · 7 Dec 2017

Marcia Poletti @olgem outlines the need for whole systems approach to energy future #pfwEvents. @WWUtilities. RBO 2 is an opportunity to move forward



Stakeholder groups	Engagement channels	Example engagement	Outputs/outcomes
Internal: colleagues (direct and contract), trade unions, shareholders and investors	Pipeline (intranet), monthly Team Talks, quarterly Colleague Roadshows, health & safety briefings, shareholder & investor presentations, newsletters	Daily colleague news posts on Pipeline (intranet), reaching more than 1,500 colleagues and contractors who can engage and comment on content	Colleagues are kept informed of business activities daily and can engage with directors, managers and peers and can contribute to programmes and initiatives
Government and regulatory bodies: highways authorities, local authorities, national/regional governments, including BEIS, Regulators – Ofgem and HSE	Political engagement programme for AMs, MPs, councillors – local/district/parish; government department briefings, attendance at conferences, private briefings, newsletters	Campaign to engage more than 140 MPs and AMs to help inform their constituents of bad weather planning, such as during Storm Emma and Beast from the East	Politicians supported our social media campaigns to help keep people safe and warm during poor conditions
		177 events on the future of energy attended , engaging with BEIS, Ofgem and other key stakeholders	Interest raised and visits arranged for key BEIS and other stakeholders to find out more about 2050 Energy Pathfinder and Freedom project
Industry groups: Energy UK, Shippers, Suppliers, Gas Safe Register	Online surveys, industry workshops, Critical Friends Panel, regional workshops, newsletters	Questionnaire to 45 shippers to engage on current customer service levels	Low response rate prompted focus on increasing engagement channels, eg collaborative GDN and National Grid engagement
Customers: gas consumers, new connections customers, large gas users, fuel poor customers, developers and construction contractors, small/medium-sized businesses	Social media, customer satisfaction surveys, focus groups, partner contact, GD2 Consumer Consultation Programme, community events/summer shows, newsletters	Focus group for 43 customers who had experienced gas mains replacement	Customers wanted one longer gas supply interruption in preference to two shorter ones and increased communication opportunities. We've focused on live insertion to ensure one gas interruption and appointed a further five Customer Support Officers to increase community communication
Consumer/vulnerability groups: Energy Savings Trust, Citizens Advice, National Farmers Union, Fire & Rescue Services, Age Cymru, British Red Cross, Salvation Army, National Energy Action, Care & Repair	Critical Friends Panel, regional workshops, conferences, partnership meetings, community events/summer shows, newsletters	Stakeholders at Stronger Together conference said to work in partnership and collaboration and focus on vulnerability; 50 stakeholders at regional workshops and 27 Critical Friends Panel members ranked vulnerability as one of their key priorities	Executive member-led Social Obligations Steering Group set up, directing work with key partnerships delivering benefits for people in vulnerable situations, eg 96% of CO alarms issued during 2017/18 were to those most affected by this poisonous gas and 62% increase in number of people added to the Priority Services Register on 2016/17
Supply chain partners: Devon & Cornwall Business Council (DCBC), Sector Skills Council, suppliers, Confederation for British Industry, Federation of Small Businesses	Critical Friends Panel, regional workshops, partnership meetings, conferences, newsletters, social media, face-to-face meetings	Regular meetings and teleconferences with DCBC to discuss areas of mutual interest, to share challenges on skills training and recruitment in south west England	Following engagement, we've got membership representation on one of DCBC's three strategic boards, focusing on education and recruitment supporting our engineer recruitment in the south west of England and their inclusivity of member interests and expertise
Other networks: gas distribution networks, distribution network operators, transmission and other utilities	ENA collaborative working groups, including Collaborative Engagement Group, conferences, face-to-face meetings and teleconferences, social media	Meetings with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water to discuss their consumer-facing engagement campaign for their periodic review of charges helped hone our GD2 consumer survey "chatbot" artificial intelligence element	Understanding the pros and cons of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's own chatbot survey helped us develop a very customer-friendly survey and channel for GD2
Education and skills: Energy & Utility Skills, education business partnerships, safety centres, academia and universities	Critical Friends Panel, regional workshops, newsletters, email, partnership meetings, topic-specific and stakeholder-specific workshops	76 students took part in a Future Bill Payers workshop to give insight from a younger generation on the services we should be providing in the future	79% said it was important or very important that investment continues in the gas network for the future and 93% said it was important or very important that we invest to find greener ways to power and heat homes and businesses. This validates our continued investment in our gas network and our work in the future of energy space for the future bill payers
		31 stakeholders, including colleagues, joined our Future of Energy webinar hosted by our Director of Asset Management, Safety & Environment	100% of attendees said they now understood the role we play in the future of energy
Press and media: national, regional and local	Press releases, social media, face-to-face meetings, conference attendance	Keeping close contact with local media during supply interruptions and gas leak emergencies causing community disruption	When contractors damaged a gas pipe while building a new out-of-town superstore near Exeter, we closed a lane on the motorway so we could repair the pipe safely. We kept in regular contact with the local news media to let people know what was happening and did a series of radio interviews to give the news in person. This increased the level and quality of communication with local people and resulted in no complaints about our work

programme at operational depots, where members of our Innovation team identify local challenges that innovative solutions might help overcome – helping us to build a culture of internal engagement.

Stakeholder priorities

Every year our stakeholders rank the business areas they want us to prioritise. We track movement against the previous year to help us understand what stakeholders would like us to focus on. We discuss the reasons for the rankings in our workshops, so, for example, a slipped ranking may not mean stakeholders want us to focus less, but that they're satisfied with how we're performing in that area – this was the case for customer service and theft of gas last year.

2016/17

- 1 CO awareness and prevention
- 2 Lower carbon future
- 3 Theft of gas
- 4 Supporting the fuel poor
- 5 Meeting future demand
- 6 Major incident planning
- 7 Customers in vulnerable situations
- 8 Innovation
- 9 Protecting the environment
- 10 Smart metering

2017/18

- 1 CO awareness and prevention =
- 2 Customers in vulnerable situations **+5**
- 3 Lower carbon future **-1**
- 4 Supporting the fuel poor =
- 5 Meeting future demand =
- 6 Innovation **+2**
- 7 Customer service NEW
- 8 Connections NEW
- 9 Theft of gas **-6**
- 10 Major incident planning **-4**
- 11 Protecting the environment **-2**
- 12 Smart metering **-2**

We analyse stakeholder priorities to identify gaps in our focus – last year Customer Service and Connections were added, following stakeholders' agreement.

Our independent stakeholder specialists report on what stakeholders have said and produce a set of recommendations for us to consider. Recommendations are discussed with the relevant Executive member to agree next steps and formulate engagement plans, and then we report back on our plans to our stakeholders. Senior managers from across our business support in presenting and facilitating our workshops, helping embed engagement in our business and providing our stakeholders with access to senior members.

Topic-specific/ stakeholder-specific engagement

We engage with stakeholders on topics they are specifically interested in, as well as holding sessions for specific types of stakeholders.

In March 2018, we **held three Future Bill Payers workshop sessions with 76 Year 10 students**. They discussed the relative impact of our costs on the average gas bill in relation to the services we provide. The three workshops were **facilitated by colleagues to improve their skillset and embed engagement**.

Our replacement work is disruptive and is evidenced in our customer survey responses. We **held two customer focus groups with 43 stakeholders** to ask them about their experience of our work – communication was a key issue and some outcomes from the focus groups are detailed in Part Two.

Engagement channels

While face-to-face engagement is a valuable source of stakeholder feedback, as validated by our CFP, we're aware that it's not always convenient for stakeholders. To be as accessible as possible, we've introduced a range of online channels to complement face-to-face engagement.

Newsletters – Proactively updating our stakeholders, including AMs and MPs, on latest news and developments. We sent our *Sharing Success* report to **more than 2,000 stakeholders**.

StickyWorld – This online engagement platform gives stakeholders who can't attend events in person the opportunity to provide us with their opinions in the form of digital notes. Only eight stakeholders could attend our December CFP due to bad weather, but we were able to **share our update with 103 stakeholders** who have expressed interest in our CFP, gaining further valuable feedback using this channel.

Webinars – Our CFP asked for an update on our vision for the future of energy, so we **held a webinar attended by 31 stakeholders and colleagues**. Due to the positive feedback we received following this style of engagement, more are planned for 2018.

Surveys – Online surveys take little time to complete and can be cascaded to a large number of stakeholders quickly, but are only an effective form of engagement for stakeholders whom the business already has a good relationship with, as proven with our Shipper engagement exercise (page 5).

Enhanced, strategic social media:

- We use social channels such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn to engage with our stakeholders. Analysis showed the 16–22 age group – a key audience – were using picture-led channel Instagram – so we created an Instagram profile.
- We've increased engagement with our Facebook posts by targeting messages at specific audiences, based on location, age and interest. Our messages relating to work programmes, future of energy and recruitment have been **reached by 439% more than the previous regulatory period** and the number of **people who like our Facebook page has grown by 135%**
 - We verified our Facebook account during 2017/18. GD2 consultation will involve promotion through Facebook, so we wanted to make sure people know our channel is official and that we'd look after data they provided – this helps us rank higher in search engines, making it easier for stakeholders to engage with us.



CASE STUDY

Political engagement

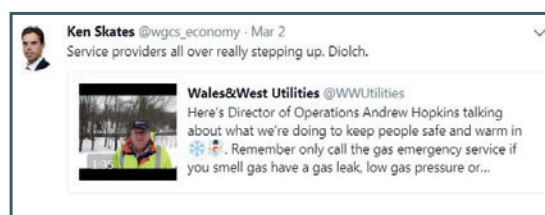
Following a political audit we carried out in 2016/17, which told us politicians were keen to know more about us, we introduced a political monitoring service to keep informed of key issues in the Welsh and Westminster Governments. During 2017/18, we embarked on a programme of engagement with influential stakeholders to discuss:

- work we've done to support customers in vulnerable situations
- the role we play in an integrated gas/electricity energy system
- skills training and apprenticeships
- investment we make in the gas network
- CO gas safety awareness

We've subsequently appointed a Public Affairs consultancy to help us better tailor engagement programmes to engage more effectively with these important stakeholders on the issues that matter to them.

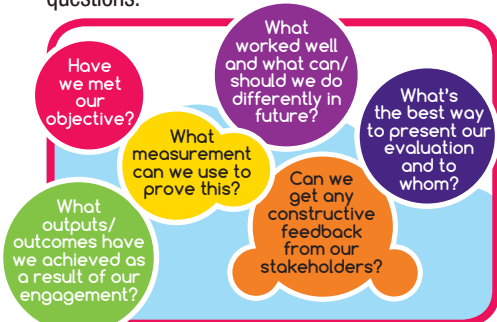
During 2017/18, Julie James AM and Anna McMorris MP toured our Training Academy, speaking to apprentices and seeing for themselves the work we do to create jobs in their constituencies.

We regularly provide all politicians in our area with information on our operations – in March, during Storm Emma, we provided all AMs and MPs in our network with safety information they could promote to their constituents. We also provide winter preparedness updates and joined in a winter preparedness campaign for winter 2017/18 with the other GDNs and Distribution Network Operators.



EVALUATING AND MEASURING ENGAGEMENT

Evaluating engagement allows us to make sure we're always getting the best outcomes for our stakeholders. We ask ourselves the following questions:



Some feedback from our engagement exercises:

- ✓ 100% said our Future of Energy webinar improved their understanding of the role we're playing in the future of energy
- ✓ 100% would recommend using webinars as a channel to use again for future engagement

- ✓ 100% said our regional workshops were interesting or very interesting
- ✓ 100% said they had the opportunity to contribute at our workshops
- ✓ 97% said we covered the right topics at our workshops
- ✓ 100% said our partnership training was very useful

A balanced meeting, with excellent content, well presented. Broad range of topics discussed.
Workshop attendee

Media monitoring

To make sure we're aware of the impact our work has on our reputation, our media monitoring tool collects, analyses and reports on stakeholder sentiment to tell us how we're being perceived by stakeholders.

Our Chief Executive, Executive members and

senior managers receive daily updates – providing transparency and accountability – along with a monthly sentiment report.

Through this report, which is an agenda item in our Business Operating Committee chaired by our Chief Executive, we identify what went well, what should be adopted as best practice, where we need to improve and what we need to prevent it happening again.

We have access to a platform, which gives near real-time updates on our sentiment, meaning we can be proactive in our response – particularly useful during a gas emergency, and disruptive replacement work, and helps further inform our strategies. Colleagues see the impact their actions have, helping to drive ownership and accountability.

Over the last 12 months, the **sentiment of our media coverage has increased from 5.55 to 5.64**, as a result of a well-managed PR & Communications strategy.

ACCREDITATIONS AND INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

Institute of Customer Service – ServiceMark Distinction



Stakeholders told us we should continue to benchmark ourselves against organisations outside our industry.

So we've continued to have our customer service independently evaluated by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS), which awarded us its ServiceMark with Distinction in 2017 for meeting its demanding national customer service standard.

We **achieved a customer satisfaction score of 90.4**, for our whole business, considerably higher than the utility sector benchmark of 73.3 and the all-sector benchmark score of 77.4.

Achieving ServiceMark once is a sign Wales & West Utilities is determined to demonstrate a commitment to continuously improve customer service standards and constantly evolve plans for service improvement. Achieving it again demonstrates a determination to meet customer needs as their preferences constantly change and evolve. By continuing to respond to the demands of their customers, Wales & West Utilities will be in a stronger position to offer them what they want, when they want and how they want it.

Jo Causon, Chief Executive, ICS

British Standards Institute (BSI).

We gained the British Standard for Inclusive Service Provision (BS 18477) in 2016/17 and, thanks to work we've done and initiatives we've introduced and evolved since, such as our Customer Support Officers, the standard has been verified again. We're the first gas network to gain this accreditation. Our whole business was audited, not just our Customer Service team – confirming our processes and practices are evolving to maintain the highest standards.

Great customer service matters but few organisations actually deliver above and beyond expectations. Wales & West Utilities are one such company. Their willingness to go that extra mile for their customers is evident from their round-the-clock community engagement and their dedication has been rewarded with impressive results and business growth.

They have strategies in place making sure all their colleagues are engaged with the support services the company can provide to the vulnerable in society, while their proactive partnership working with local organisations means they can prioritise customers who may be at increased risk if the gas supply is disrupted.

Heather Nowak, BSI

Investors in People – Silver Award



We've been awarded Silver accreditation against the Investors in People (IiP) Standard, demonstrating our commitment to high performance through good people management. IiP is the international standard for people

management, defining what it takes to lead, support and manage people effectively to achieve sustainable results. Underpinning the Standard is the IiP framework, reflecting the latest workplace trends, essential skills and effective structures required to outperform in any industry. IiP enables organisations to benchmark against the best in the business on an international scale.

We'd like to congratulate Wales & West Utilities. Investors in People accreditation is the sign of a great employer, an outperforming place to work and a clear commitment to success. Wales & West Utilities should be extremely proud of their achievement.

Paul Devoy, Head of IiP

IGEM Company of the Year Award

We're immensely proud to have just been awarded IGEM's prestigious Company of the Year Award for our work in 2017/18 – heralded at the awards' presentation as "a top-performing company – not just among utilities but in wider industry".



Our customer service, safety, people investment and future of energy achievements were judged to be leading-edge and key in helping us win the title.

We also won the Energy Efficiency Award for our role in the Freedom hybrid heating project.

BS 18477 Inclusive Service Provision



Our commitment to making sure we look after all customers, especially those in vulnerable situations, has once again been recognised by the



Area	Source	Example action/output	Example benefit/outcome
Driving outstanding service	Critical Friends Panel (CFP)	27 Critical Friends Panel members at two sessions scrutinised our GD2 engagement proposal and current business plans	CO strategy revised so partners install CO alarms for people most affected as soon as vulnerability is identified
	Workshop	At two regional workshops, 50 stakeholders re-ranked their priorities for 2017/18	New partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses gives easier access to hard-to-reach stakeholders
	Research	43 focus group stakeholders gave useful insight on mains replacement work	More Customer Support Officers appointed , improving customer communication during replacement work, while supporting people in vulnerable situations. Customer Satisfaction Scores increased from 9.11 (2016/17) to 9.15 (2017/18)
	Audit	ICS Accreditation with Distinction rating	Distinction rating of 90.4 puts us ahead of John Lewis and Marks & Spencer (UK all sector average of 77.4)
	Audit	BS 18477 Inclusive Service Provision standard with verification in 2017/18	First and only GDN to receive the BS 18477 standard for whole business
	Workshop & CFP	<i>Sharing Success</i> summarises regulatory and other business information in print and online, for colleagues and stakeholders	Easy to read information on key business achievements
	Workshop	Partner online data-capture form for CO alarms, PSR and other partner referrals	People gain priority service and other referral services quicker with data security
	Workshop	Four new Vulnerability Champions – experts in dementia, and 16 more Dementia Friends trained , taking our total to more than 120	Support for colleagues in identifying vulnerabilities and better bespoke customer service
	Workshop	New online PSR sign-up form, promoted through social media	Wide awareness raising with specific audiences targeted via Facebook, and 296 further PSR sign-ups, so people receive support needed. 3,515 people signed up to PSR (2017/18) – a 62% increase on 2016/17
	Best practice	Daily customer service complaint calls continued	Complaints resolution improved in D+1 to 83%
	Workshop	New Public Affairs support	Supporting increased engagement with politicians in our area
	Workshop	Multi-channel approach to raise awareness of CO Safety competition – paid-for social media and letters to schools	More than 90,000 people saw our post – and the campaign we ran to promote the competition was a finalist at the Cymru Wales Pride Awards
	Workshop	Introduced Recite Me tool to our website	Better accessibility for stakeholders with visual impairment
	CFP	New online stakeholder management system with four colleagues trained as super-users to support other colleagues	Secure stakeholder engagement data – efficient stakeholder mapping
Demanding safety always	Workshop	4,581 CO alarms issued (2017/18), 96% to those most affected by this poisonous gas	CO alarms installed to people in vulnerable situations and those most susceptible to CO
	Audit	5th RoSPA Gold Award	Safety assurance for customers and all stakeholders
	Workshop	Installed 29 Locking Cooker Valves (LCVs)	Helping people remain safely at home, giving family members peace of mind
	Workshop	Created visual <i>How to install a CO alarm</i> guide	Simplified installation instructions to ease partner installation
	Workshop	Three new CO awareness animated films	Viewed on social media 300,000+ times
	Vulnerable Customer Forum	132 Free of Charge alterations completed – average £613/alteration	Helping people in vulnerable situations access their meters
	Workshop	Priority service training for 98 Fire & Rescue personnel and Care & Repair caseworkers	Awareness of services and ability to promote increased by 112%
	Workshop	Free attendance at Royal Bath & West Show and Royal Welsh Show with Fire & Rescue partners	CO messages reached children due to position in safety zone (370,000+ visitors attended shows)
	Sharing best practice	Organised LGSE exercise	Updated procedures and new partnership proposed eg Red Cross
	Workshop	New online portal for large industrial and commercial users, for 'load shedding' exercise	Improved exercise experience reported, 14% increase (on 2016/17) in those able to switch off their gas supply
	Workshop	Quarterly All Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group Meetings, chaired by member of parliament	Identifying and sharing CO best practice with other GDNs; influencing CO policy
	Workshop	20 new Gas Safety Ambassadors	550+ children received CO safety information and took it home
Designing our future	Workshop	Freedom project – trialling hybrid heating	BEIS see hybrid heating as a potential for delivering decarbonised, affordable heat
	Workshop	2050 Energy Pathfinder model	Supports organisations, including GDNs, with long-term energy strategy planning
	Workshop	Apprentice recruitment campaign	373,000 + viewed on Facebook, with 500 applications for 2018/19 apprenticeships
	CFP	New links with academia	Supporting spin-out businesses and building knowledge-sharing channels
	Workshop	Trialled separation boards and blankets, to create a barrier between gas and electricity meters	Reduced engineer visit number and improved customer experience of smart meter installation
	Workshop	New sealant trial to repair leaking gas pipes	Reduced interruptions to supply, improving customer experience and reducing compensation requests
	Workshop	New PipeCheck 2 tool identifies pipe contents	Avoids unnecessary damage to water mains
	Workshop	New mobile pipe-mapping	Improved data accuracy and safety
	Audit	Investors in People Silver accreditation at first attempt	Supports aim to be an employer of choice
Provide a reliable gas supply and promote sustainability	Workshop	Creation of a Green Gas Team	Dedicated resource removing barriers for green gas connections
	Workshop	New Network Exit Agreement	Helping peaking plants connect, supporting renewable energy and sharing best practice with others
	Workshop	Better communication with large gas users	Improved customer service for major gas users
Delivering value for money	Workshop	Recovered more than £540,000 from unregistered gas users	Reduced theft of gas reduces billpayer costs
	Workshop	Revised reinstatement Key Performance Indicators	95% of reinstatements completed in D+48 , more reinstatements completed in D+24
	Workshop	Invested in Microsoft's Surface Hub to connect with our Smart Rooms	Reduction in colleague travel time and associated costs
	Best practice	Invested in Cyber Risk Management	Reduced risk to systems

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT INCENTIVE SUBMISSION 2017/18

PART TWO

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Introduction

Our Executive team drive forward our business vision through our five business priorities – which align to our stakeholders' priorities, taking on board stakeholder feedback to help hone and shape our business plans.

We're a values-based business, operating a values-based recruitment policy, wherever possible, with colleague performance linked to our priorities and values, supported by our values-based behavioural framework.

Our engagement strategy, outlined in Part One, underpins delivery of innovative outcomes for our stakeholders – some independently recognised during 2017/18 as best practice. Examples of stakeholder engagement and feedback influencing and improving business performance are evidenced in this Part Two section.

Stakeholder engagement is monitored, measured and reported on at least monthly through the business, at local team meetings and our business operating committee, chaired and led by our Chief Executive, and attended by our Executive team.

We outline key examples of the stakeholder groups with whom we've engaged, what they've told us and what we've done as a result of their feedback, aligned to our five business priorities:

- Driving outstanding service
- Demanding safety always (page 4)
- Doing all we can to provide a reliable gas supply and promote sustainability (page 6)
- Delivering value for money (page 8)
- Designing our future (page 9)

We're proud of our engagement strategy, the values we live and work by every day, and the valuable outcomes we've delivered for stakeholders and consumers this year.



Our ambition is to deliver world-class levels of service for our customers while protecting the needs of the most vulnerable.

Some things that stakeholders told us...

Continue to meet or exceed your customer service levels

Collaborate more effectively and broadly with partners across a range of social obligations issues

Improve knowledge of vulnerable customers' locations

We've done...

- **Received a ServiceMark Distinction rating** for our customer service
- Evolved Fuel Poor Reduction Hubs to create Community Energy Champions, **saving houses more than £380 on average**
- **Signed up more than 3,500 people to the Priority Services Register** during 2017/18 – a **62% increase** on 2016/17

Partnerships hold the key

SUPPORTING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Graham Edwards, Chief Executive, said: *"We believe we should focus on doing our job as a gas network to the best of our ability and partner with better-placed organisations to help us provide the above-and-beyond services our customers rightly expect."*

Regional stakeholders and our Critical Friends Panel (CFP) told us to continue providing excellent customer service and make people in vulnerable situations a key focus. Partnership working is crucial to achieving this.

We work with partners who share our values. **We take a holistic approach, asking partners to promote all our support measures and**

services: carbon monoxide awareness and alarms, Priority Services Register (PSR) referrals, Locking Cooker Valve installation and free Warm Home Assistance gas connections. They help people in vulnerable situations that we'd normally have difficulty reaching, to:

- Stay safe if their gas, electricity or water services are interrupted
- Gain access to debt and energy tariff-switching services
- Source funding for new household appliances, including gas boilers

Last year, **we trained 98 partner colleagues** about our priority customer services.

Our leadership team believes the success of partnership working goes further than measuring, monitoring, reviewing and improving partnership processes. Real partnerships deliver positive outcomes for our shared customers, support our partner organisations (often through cross-referrals) and make clear business sense for us due to efficient and effective delivery. Truly embedded partnerships demonstrate real commitment between organisations to the best delivery route for customers. They are authentic and rely on this shared commitment to succeed in the long-term. This has been a key focus during 2017/18 – and is set to continue.

Key partnerships

Our partners benefit by increasing the services they offer their clients, demonstrating to government they are working effectively in partnership with the private sector and other charitable and government services. We gain access to support for our most vulnerable and hard-to-reach customers.



BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP SET TO FLOURISH

Engagement with small/medium-sized businesses who are impacted by our work has previously been challenging – we would class these as a hard-to-reach stakeholder group.

To improve engagement, we invited the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) to join our CFP. As a result, during 2017/18, we formed a **new partnership** with them. FSB supports **around 25,000 members across our area** and, as part of our partnership, we let them know about our work plans as early as possible

so they can share information with their members, and feedback has shown this has a positive outcome for them.

This partnership has opened up opportunities for collaboration with small business entrepreneurs to help us address industry innovation challenges, and since FSB member responses to their 2017 energy survey, shared with us, referenced difficulties in accessing the energy industry supply chain, we're going to be supporting members with procurement

advice on supplying large businesses.

Roadworks disruption can cause real business problems, so I'm really pleased we now get early sight of proposed schemes so our members can prepare.

Terry Lockwood, Regional National Councillor, south west England

Keeping customer data safe

Taking on board feedback from partnership managers following face-to-face progress catch-ups and understanding the importance of looking after customer data, we've created a new, secure online version of the original paper-based data-capture form, which has been **used more than 100 times** since it was introduced in January 2018.

It allows partners to return customer information to us faster, increasing the speed at which stakeholders receive the benefits we can offer them. Importantly, with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) changes coming into force in May 2018, customer data is kept secure.



OUR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING VULNERABILITY

Community Energy Champions

Following the success of our Fuel Poor Reduction Hubs in 2016/17, and to support the shift in stakeholder focus to prioritise people in vulnerable situations (regional workshops and CFP members), we launched the Community Energy Champions (CEC) project in partnership with our fuel poor partner, Warm Wales.

CECs offer a range of advice

on debt and benefit, home and personal safety, tariff-switching, energy efficiency and health and wellbeing. They identify 'hard-to-reach' vulnerable and fuel-poor households through Foundation Data for Robust Energy Strategies (Fresh) mapping, which layers data on poor health, poverty, poor housing and over-65s so we know where we need to focus our resources.

We've targeted three

different approaches in south Wales, north Wales and Cornwall, working with key support services in local authorities and helping lift people out of fuel poverty in ways other than simply providing a gas connection.

We're committed to this approach and will be trialling telephone referrals through organisations such as Citizens Advice and Centre for Sustainable Energy in future.

Increasing access to PSR support

In line with our stakeholders' feedback to continue to focus on people in the most vulnerable situations, we aim to maximise our interactions with the thousands of people we come into contact with every day through our work in local communities.

Last year, we provided **vulnerability training to all our 1,250 customer-facing colleagues**, and **created four Vulnerability Champions** to whom other

colleagues can refer with questions about customer vulnerability.

We're training more Vulnerability Champions this year.

Now I've had the training, I feel in a much better position when I meet someone with dementia – I know what to do.
Emergency Engineer, Wales & West Utilities

Summary of investment and benefits

September 2017 – 31 March 2018

Investment (north & south Wales & Cornwall)	Properties benefited	Average saving/home	Actual savings (Year 1)	Projected savings over 5 years (£122,000 level investment)
£122,000	379	£386	£146,294	£730,000

September 2017 – September 2018

Investment (north & south Wales & Cornwall)	Projected savings (Year 1)	Projected savings over 5 years (£209,000 level investment)
£209,000	£617,000	£3,000,000

Stakeholders at our Stronger Together conference told us about the importance of increasing the number of people on the PSR and regional stakeholders suggested an online form.

We've increased the number of people on the PSR by using targeted social media, online forms and our partnerships. As a result,

we had **more than 3,500 referrals** in 2017/18, a **62% increase** on 2016/17.

25% PSR referrals from partners – **559%** increase on 2016/17

Facebook social media targeting achieved **296** referrals

We were the first network to get data-sharing agreements with a DNO

and a water company for PSR referrals. We've shared this agreement template and our partnership process with the Safeguarding Customer Working Group.

Now all Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) will data-share with water companies in their area, helping increase the number referred to the PSR and making it an easier experience for customers.

Communication, communication, communication

NEW CUSTOMER SUPPORT OFFICERS IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH CUSTOMERS

Customer feedback following gas pipe replacement work showed we needed to improve communication. We **introduced four Customer Support Officers** (CSOs) in 2016/17, as a new customer communication channel, following a successful trial in 2015/16.

CSOs visit homes and businesses to talk to customers before projects start and find out about vulnerabilities and potential problems, such as holidays. They're on site while we're working and follow up with customers once we've

completed. As a result, **queries have reduced by 35%** and **complaints by 20%**, showing the personal touch to communication pays dividends.

We've now recruited more CSOs and have **nine deployed to support local communities**.

I've been impressed with information I've been sent regarding your work [mains replacement]. I've also, on two occasions, phoned your Customer Support Officer and she's been very helpful and has, as promised, got back to me with the information I required more or less immediately on both occasions.

Resident, Cardiff

WEATHERING THE STORM

During Storm Emma and the Beast from the East, we **handled more than 1,000 gas emergency calls a day** (on an average winter's day we'll receive around 300), many of which related to frozen gas boiler condensate pipes, something we weren't able to resolve. Social media was full of people wondering why their boilers weren't working. In total we received more than 6,700 calls – one every 16 seconds at its peak. To help people resolve their problems and reduce the volume of these calls, we created a social media plan to reach a wide audience quickly. We:

- Proactively contacted influential stakeholders in our network, such as AMs and MPs, to update them and ask them to

share our pre-constructed social media status updates

- Created a short film, presented by our Director of Operations, to tell customers what to do if they suffered a loss of gas supply or suspected CO poisoning

Our film was **viewed more than 48,000 times** and **more than 99.99% of the customers we serve saw no impact on their gas supply**.



Accessible communications

Making sure our information is accessible to everyone, especially customers in vulnerable situations, is important to us and our stakeholders. For this reason we:

- Apply the principles of plain English to our customer communications
- Take a visually-led approach on our website – making it easier to navigate and introducing hyperlinks to websites of organisations that offer additional support services
- Introduced a new tool – Recite Me – which reads selected sections of our website out loud so users don't have to adjust colour balances or font sizes to access the information they need

Customer Service Charter

We know our stakeholders want us to support people in vulnerable situations, so we want to assure them we have the policies and procedures to do this. Our engagement strategy is transparent and we want to make sure our customer policies and procedures align with it.

We've revised our Customer Service Charter so it includes all our services and additional services for those who might need extra

support related to accessing their gas meters, communication or safety needs. It also lets people know what we'll do if things go wrong.

It's on our website and we keep people up to date with it using traditional and social media.

We know people can't choose their gas network, but if they could, we'd want them to choose ours.

fast facts

New partnerships help people in vulnerable situations access debt and energy tariff-switching advice

PSR referrals increased by 62% during 2016/17

More than 6,700 calls handled during Storm Emma/Beast from the East

Storm Emma/Beast from the East information film viewed more than 48,000 times

Four Vulnerability Champions roles created

New tool introduced to make website accessible to all

Five more Customer Support Officers appointed, taking our total to nine

Sharing best practice and collaboration

CREATING A CULTURE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Stakeholders told us it's important for us to maintain or exceed the excellent levels of customer service we provide for our customers.

We received a Distinction-level ServiceMark from the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) – one of only 13 organisations in the UK to achieve this.

Customer service is a key Ofgem performance



output and is one of our business priorities. As a monopoly, we believe it's important to demonstrate our commitment to delivering excellent service to our customers.

So colleagues understand why great customer service is so important and to help us meet customers' growing service expectations, we **held a Customer Service Conference with 70+ colleagues, in partnership with the ICS.**

Colleagues discussed best practice and:

- The shift in customer expectations and how

these have impacted business

- The biggest challenges facing customer-focused businesses
- The customer of the future with the challenges and opportunities they present

During National Customer Service Week (NCSW) 2017, we ran a five-day internal communications campaign to reinforce the message that customer service is part of everyone's role.

Taking part in NCSW gives us a real opportunity to continue raising our focus on customer service internally. We also



responded to requests to share best practice by hosting a business benchmarking breakfast.

SUPPORTING OTHER NETWORKS

Making sure customers' gas supplies are reconnected as soon as possible is important.

This is why, during a recent loss of gas supply in Silsden, west Yorkshire, which affected more than 3,000 homes, we

supported Northern Gas Networks by sending 27 engineers, including three First Line Managers.

Regardless of where gas pipes are located in the UK, the skillset required to work

on them remains the same – which is why we were happy to share our resources to reduce the impact on customers.

We **visited more than 1,000 properties in the area.**

We'd like to thank Wales & West Utilities for their support over the Easter weekend with this incident. When something happens on this scale, it's heartening to know we can call on our fellow gas networks to help get people back on gas as quickly and safely as possible.

Customer Experience Director, Northern Gas Networks

Making the connections

Through surveys, customers said they'd like us to extend our working hours to improve their experience of our gas connections process.

So we've created a new Customer Connections Advisor team, which is available at the times our customers said they really needed them – after the

working day – and they handle the whole connection application process as a 'one-stop connections shop'.

Requesting a quote to getting a new gas connection date **now takes around 15 minutes rather than the seven days** it could previously take when dealt

with by different teams.

The customer score for 'time taken to receive a quotation' has **increased from 9.00**, when the team was created, **to 9.18** at the end of March 2018. As a result, we're looking to expand the role and introduce additional services, such as a live chat, later this year.

Executive-led calls resolve complaints quicker

We introduced daily Executive-led customer complaint teleconferences in 2016/17 and complaint resolution times have continued to improve, with **83% now being resolved within 24 hours** – improving on last year's resolution rate of 81%.

Our daily teleconferences have evolved into a sounding board for

sharing best practice and give managers a useful perspective to help prevent complaints.

We've shared this approach with other stakeholders too: Sovereign Housing was impressed with our approach and is now looking at how it can introduce such a system into its operating model.

Taking to the streets

Our highways authority stakeholders, at industry forums such as Welsh/South West Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee (HAUC), told us that poor reinstatements are an issue for them as they cause unnecessary roadwork disruption in their areas.

We're keen to make sure the work we carry out has the best chance of lasting in challenging conditions, so we've worked with Devon Highways Authority and other utility companies to improve performance.

This initiative has led to us **achieving 95.5% compliance – a 30% increase – and becoming the top-performing utility in the region**. As a result, we've been promoting the benefits of using a single, high-quality reinstatement material to

the Department for Transport and their contractor AECOM, to consider introducing a single small patching mix across England and, working with the devolved governments, ultimately the UK.

This is one of several initiatives we collaborated on during 2017/18 aimed at reducing the disruption of our work on the communities we serve, and improving our customer satisfaction scores.

These include working with Bristol City Council on its code of conduct to reduce the impact of our streetworks and on a trial to speed up our work in areas where there are traffic lights to lessen the impact on the travelling public.

We're also due to **introduce new signage on smaller roadworks that include**

start/finish times to keep people informed.

Recognising the importance of such engagement, we're aiming to publish a full stakeholder-led plan at the end of 2018 that we hope will help all our partners understand each other's challenges better and enable us all to plan better in future.

Customers, through their Satisfaction Surveys, said that mud left on pavements as a result of our work was making its way into their homes from their shoes. Acting on this, we trialled and then invested in jet washers – 35 of them – to make sure we clean up after ourselves. Following a colleague suggestion, and trial, we've introduced hand-held vacuum cleaners to clear up inside homes too. We're rolling out these approaches across our network.

fast facts

More than 630 views of our Customer Service Charter

Distinction-level ICS ServiceMark achieved

27 engineers provided support to sister network during incident

Demanding safety always

Demanding
SAFETY
ALWAYS

We keep raising the bar on safety, continually looking for innovative ways to improve standards for our customers and colleagues.

Some things that stakeholders told us...

Make sure you're prepared for major incidents

Continue to raise awareness of CO, targeting those most affected

Make sure you're represented on local authorities' resilience forums

We've done...

- Hosted a Loss of Gas Supply Emergency event
- Created colleague-led Gas Safety Ambassador roles
- Improved our interaction with a number of resilience forums

Evolution of the COdebreakers

More than 590 people have 'Cracked the COde' during 2017/18 and we've followed this with three short animated films, targeting people at specific and relevant times of the year – such as holiday season when people are camping and using BBQs – to help spread awareness. These animations have been **viewed more than 300,000 times**.^{1,2,3}

Focus on CO saves lives

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO RAISE AWARENESS OF CARBON MONOXIDE

Stakeholders continually place raising the awareness of carbon monoxide (CO) as their top priority. Our partnerships help us to deliver CO awareness to people we'd have difficulty reaching (see page 1).

Feedback from a range of stakeholders at our CFP and regional workshops said we should make sure we target CO awareness and alarm

installation to those most at risk.

As a result, last year:

- More than 4,500 CO alarms were distributed
- 2,600 (56%) CO alarms were installed by our partners as soon as they identified a vulnerability
- 96% of our CO alarms went to those most

affected, compared to 33% during 2016/17

Feedback from recipients of CO alarms through the post – as a result of a change in business process that means we provide alarms following free of charge meter moves, Warm Home Assistance connections and PSR referrals – told us

manufacturers' guides are difficult to understand, so we designed a visually led *How to install a CO alarm* guide to make alarm installation easier. These are included with every alarm we issue and **100% said they found it useful**.

In 2017/18, CO alarm feedback forms indicated that **awareness of CO increased by 38%** and **likelihood to take further action as a result was 97%**.

GAS SAFETY AMBASSADORS

Stakeholders at regional workshops told us we should continue to raise CO awareness among children – one of the groups most affected by this poisonous gas.

We've created voluntary colleague Gas Safety Ambassadors (GSAs) and recruited 20 colleagues who go into schools and other groups such as Brownies to raise awareness of CO safety.

CO awareness sessions are tailored for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children and we've

reached more than 550 pupils since introduction in early 2018. We also adopted the Safety Seymour initiative from Cadent in 2018, targeted at Year 2 pupils, and reached more than 90 children so far.

Really positive, a good way of introducing the harmful nature of CO – a nice day of activities.
Teacher, primary school



¹ <https://www.facebook.com/wwutilities/videos/1397701250313249/>

² <https://www.facebook.com/wwutilities/videos/1545509668865739/>

³ <https://www.facebook.com/wwutilities/videos/1467168926699814/>

Safety on record



We're proud of our safety record, **winning a Gas Distribution Network (GDN) record number of Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold Awards**. Our fifth award saw us achieve a higher standard and receive a commendation from RoSPA at the Oil and Gas Sector Awards.

We're taking great strides to make sure colleague and stakeholder safety remains top of our agenda, and that we have rigorous safety systems and processes and a commitment to continuously improve our record.

Last year, we **achieved accreditation for the first time in an audit for the international standard OHSAS 18001 for health and safety management systems**. This four-day audit examined all aspects of our health and safety management systems, mirroring Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance HSG65, to make sure it's used throughout our operations.

We regularly meet trades union representatives, who we see as an extension of our Health and Safety team, to ensure alignment with our safety culture.

Our Road to Zero initiative has **reduced cable strikes during our direct labour operations, with only 16 in 2017/18, down from 27 in 2016/17**.



We also carry out awareness campaigns to complement mandatory training, such as Be Winter Safe. Winter conditions and increased workload increases the likelihood of accidents, so we focus on seasonal hazards to maintain our high standards. From October 2017 to March 2018 (our winter period) we recorded just one lost time incident – showing the value of the campaign.

Loss and load

To plan for the event of a gas supply emergency, every year we take part in a 'load shedding' exercise to make sure we can continue to serve domestic customers.

Large industrial and commercial customers use the most gas, so by removing or reducing their gas supply for a short period, we can make sure there is enough in the system for domestic, potentially vulnerable customers.

To help us contact our large gas users quicker, we've implemented a new system, with a range of materials, including a new website, to help explain who we are and why we're carrying out the exercise. We're also holding and managing our own contact information.

Our performance has already improved, with us **reaching 95% of our contacts in 2017, compared with 81% in 2016** – the best performance of any GDN. We're also receiving more contact details from users, so our data is improving all the time.

We've **shared our new system with other networks**, including SGN, who want to develop a similar website. We've also completed a reference video conference when NGN and Cadent came to visit in April, and they're both now looking at creating a new system as a result.



Keeping people safe

We have robust systems to deal with a major loss of gas supply, understanding our stakeholders want to see us reviewing and testing those systems regularly.

During 2017/18, we held a Local Gas Supply Emergency (LGSE) workshop to share best practice among the other GDNs, Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers (IGEM) and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to improve supply restoration processes in the event of a major incident.

Key findings were the importance of planning ahead and a fast mobilisation alert system. Attendees also shared best practice on stakeholder engagement and supporting customers in vulnerable situations.

We led the industry on a major incident planning and testing exercise in May 2017, involving a simulated scenario where 65,000 consumers nationwide lost gas supply and running through the options, procedures and challenges this posed. This was crucial as we had never before practised how we would respond together on this kind of scale.

Feedback from the exercise identified a number of areas for improvement, including how to make sure older, more vulnerable people had food and heating. We've since revised some of our procedures and are proposing partnering with agencies such as the Red Cross to help better support priority customers.

We're also developing an app to give us quicker access to crucial information about people in vulnerable situations so we can respond quicker to their needs. We learned the approach taken is scalable, so can be used to help us deal with smaller-scale emergencies in future.

Building up resilience

Responding to feedback received from our CFP we've focused on building better relationships with support networks to support customers in the event of a major incident.

We've **reviewed our interaction with a number of local authority resilience forums** in Wales and the south west of England. These groups comprise multiple agencies including the emergency services, NHS and the British Red Cross.

Local resilience forums have different approaches to supporting customers, so it's important we understand all the processes and tailor our responses accordingly. This will improve customer support in the event of an emergency and avoid duplication of effort.

An example of this in action was during a loss of gas supply in Tresillian, Cornwall. The local resilience forum was able to supplement our list of Priority Customers with a list of people in vulnerable situations from the NHS, which identified gaps in our data, allowing us to prioritise households we wouldn't have known about without this relationship.

Thank you for making us aware of the situation... throughout this particular incident we've been very well informed and were able to inform our necessary partner agencies.

**Local Resilience Support Officer
Devon, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum**

fast facts

Fifth RoSPA Gold award in a row – a GDN record

20 Gas Safety Ambassadors – providing CO awareness info to 550+ schoolchildren

Led best-practice Loss of Gas Supply Emergency industry event

2,600 CO alarms installed by our trusted partners

96% of alarms provided to those most affected by CO – an increase on 33% in 2016/17

New online system can reach 14% more major gas users to turn off supplies if needed

Reviewed interaction with a number of local authority resilience forums



We remain committed to providing a reliable gas supply for our customers while protecting the environment for today and the future.

Some things that stakeholders told us...

Continue to minimise our impact on the environment

Promote the benefits of alternative low-carbon solutions

Increase resources to focus on green gas connectors

We've done...

- Created a model to assess how a future energy mix could solve the energy trilemma
- Increased biomethane connections, taking our total to 18, which has the **potential to power 126,000 homes**
- Created a dedicated Green Gas team

Leading the charge to greener energy

2050 ENERGY PATHFINDER

Working with multiple stakeholders has shown us there is no single solution to decarbonising energy, including heat, so we have created a model, 2050 Energy Pathfinder, which helps regions work out solutions to reduce their impact on the environment.

2050 Energy Pathfinder assesses how different energy mixes could resolve the energy trilemma of ensuring a secure, affordable and sustainable future energy system.

It allows any energy scenario to be modelled and the results show the costs, carbon impact and any shortfall/surplus in heat and power supply.

We modelled the energy scenario information to create a renewable Cornwall so we could evaluate their own proposals in 2015, which

showed using renewable energy to provide heat is too expensive for customers living in traditionally built homes.

The model has since been used by the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA) to consider better value storage and supply options and modelled several solutions, including for Swansea, where it demonstrated the role tidal lagoons could play in an integrated energy future.

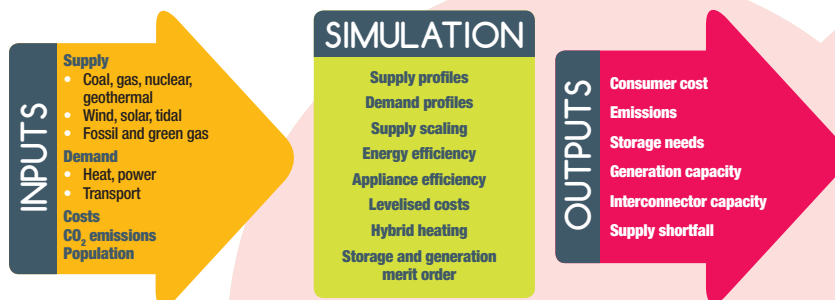
2050 Energy Pathfinder

can help distribution and transmission network operators, system operators and local government plan their energy strategies. This is already happening in Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend, helping local authorities plan their energy needs and solutions as part of long-term development planning.

It's **unique in the energy sector** and one of its designers, our Director of Asset Management, Safety

and Environment Chris Clarke, was awarded the IGEM Gold medal for the tool's innovative and forward-thinking logic.

We're engaging with the other GDNs and DNOs and are planning on sharing our work on forecasting and future energy investment scenarios using 2050 Energy Pathfinder. We plan to carry out further work in this area with them collaboratively to achieve a Green City Vision.



Network agreement

To allow green gas producers to access our network and to prevent blockages and capacity hoarding, **we have amended our network entry agreements** to make sure suppliers agree to give up their connection if they have not supplied any gas for three months.

TEAMING UP FOR GREENER GAS

Feedback from our stakeholder forums – including our alternative gas workshop – told us people want to see us bring more green gases into our network, so we've **created a Green Gas team** to help make that happen.

This addresses a specific request from stakeholders who wanted us to remove the barriers to connection and make supplying greener gases cheaper and easier for producers.

The core team deals with inquiries from producers looking to connect, while other members look at the future for green and renewable gases and address the legal, financial and other barriers to bringing more green gases on to the network.

In the past, we were seen as helpful but reactive. Now we are taking a proactive approach, conducting more in-depth research, promoting the importance of green gas

and working with the industry to remove barriers.

Since it became a permanent team, it's **helped two more suppliers come on line**. That's a number we expect to see increase considerably. In total we have 18 biomethane plants connected to our network, with the capacity to inject 1.6 TWh, the equivalent of three Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoons – **enough to power more than 126,000 homes**.

We've enjoyed working with Wales & West Utilities on biomethane connections – these projects have the lowest cost, least complexity and most capacity innovation within the GB market.

Managing Director, CNG Services Ltd

PEAK PRACTICE

Enabling more renewable energy production is important to us and our stakeholders, as we learned during numerous stakeholder engagement sessions.

To support renewable electricity generation, such as wind and solar – which

is often intermittent due to weather conditions – **we've supported the connection of seven more small gas peaking plants** (between 16 and 40MW output) during 2017/18 to cover any gaps during power demand peaks, such as breakfast and dinner times, taking our total to 31, which can generate approximately a third of the power of Hinkley Point C.

These plants can have a significant impact on our operation and storage requirements, so to make sure supply is not compromised by their demands, we've updated a number of processes.

Among the changes are more liaison with plant operators, transient network analysis for all plants, Network Exit Agreements and quicker site flow data requirements.

We've **shared the knowledge and documentation with other GDNs** and are planning workshops with peaking

plant operators and the GDNs to facilitate further knowledge and best practice sharing, to help them to improve their processes and customer experience.



Process change and engagement add value

ALL SYSTEMS GO

During 2017/18, we **merged our System Operations team** – the 24/7 control room function that monitors our network to make sure we supply gas as agreed and provide alerts if anything goes wrong – with the Strategy team working on the systems, data and engagement to facilitate that work, so all planning and operations functions sit together.

The team can now look at the short and long-term impacts of our actions and give us a better end-to-end view of our process, how things are operating and what the potential risks are.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

As part of our long-term forecasting, we **regularly engage with large gas users so we can gauge what their requirements will be in the future**, but very few contacts resulted in responses. This year we changed the way we do this, improving our communications by having more dialogue, setting up face-to-face meetings and making our contact with them more engaging.

One particular issue we addressed was our email communication. Many were blocked by systems or were addressed to people who no longer worked at the

organisations, explaining why few people engaged with us. By cleaning up the data and implementing changes to the questionnaire we sent with the emails, we were able to improve engagement and make sure we got more and better responses. This complements our revised database of contacts at large users for load shedding purposes (page 5).

We got **better outcomes from meetings with smaller suppliers**, which give us a great insight into their issues and what's driving their business, so we rolled this approach out

to our larger suppliers such as Severn Power in Newport, the largest power generation site on our network.

Having a face-to-face meeting meant we got a better view of what their future demand would be but also helped them get to know more about what we can do to help.

On the back of this learning, we have **now introduced Portfolio Managers who act as a point of contact for larger suppliers** to discuss day-to-day operations and support them with any future changes they may want to implement.

The meeting was very useful. It is always good to engage face to face to find out what is happening on the network upstream and beyond. Although our demand is unlikely to change significantly, the way the power station is dispatched will change with energy market volatility, making our gas demand largely unpredictable.

Operations Manager, Severn Power

We plan to continue this process and have already written to those who didn't respond to our new questionnaire to see how we can improve engagement even further.

CASE STUDY

Tata Steel south Wales plant



Our forecasting requirements mean the more we know about our customers' likely gas demand and the way they operate, the better.

Tata Steel is a large employer in south Wales and critical to the Wales economy. It is a large customer of ours taking a lot of gas every day and, through National Grid Metering (NGM), provides us with regular nominations for its gas requirements. There had been some issues with this, so we wanted to build better relations with them both so we could get a better understanding of the issues they face. Having had a few meetings, we were invited to Tata Steel's site in Port Talbot in February 2018 to see first-hand their operations and how our supply affects what they do. We learned a lot, including the fact unplanned outages can affect their gas demand because if their process stops, they no longer need gas for their rolling mill ovens. We also

found out they generate some of their gas on-site from the coking process.

The visit was incredibly useful for us to understand why it can be difficult for Tata Steel to accurately predict the hourly nominations they send us, on how much gas they will use, and opened a useful dialogue channel so we can act accordingly if Tata Steel wants to agree an increase in capacity.

It also helped us build a better relationship with NGM and has given us a link to its customers too.

We're now exploring innovative solutions with Tata, Swansea University and the Flexis partnership to help decarbonise steel making in south Wales.

It's important to us to build good working relationships with our gas supplier so we understand what elements of our operations can cause issues to the grid and, by the same token, Wales & West Utilities appreciate our needs. Good communications are key to this and we will continue to develop our interaction and hopefully make everyone's job a little easier.

Works Technical Manager, Tata Steel

fast facts

New dedicated Green Gas team

Potential to power more than 126,000 homes with green gas

Updated Network Exit Agreements

Focus on face-to-face engagement

A further seven peaking plants connected to support renewable energy generation, taking our total to 31, which can generate approximately a third of the power of Hinkley Point C





We will continue to spend money wisely based on what will give the best value, every time.



REINSTATING GREAT PERFORMANCE

Some things that stakeholders told us...

Continue to work to address gas theft

Improve reinstatement times

Continue to reduce impact on customer bills

We've done...

- **Collected £540,000+** dealing with theft of gas
- Revised contractor reinstatement KPIs (95% now completed in D+48)
- Continuing **bill reduction trend: £128 (2016/17) – £145 (start of GD1)**

Our customer satisfaction surveys suggested we could improve reinstatement timescales, so we **introduced a series of key performance indicators (KPIs) for our reinstatement partners.**

We worked with contractors to achieve a more customer-focused system. We spoke to stakeholders in Wales and south west England to understand the priority they placed on reducing

reinstatement timescales. They said they wanted reduced timescales but did not expect to pay more.

We decided to measure completion of work within 48 hours (our D+48 performance) and incentivised good performance for reinstatement time, good communications and site tidiness. Contractors meeting or exceeding their targets receive a bonus and we've since **seen around 95% of reinstatements**

completed in D+48 (GDN average is around 85%) – and a rise in D+24 completions too.

KPIs intensify through the contract:

- Year 1 – 90% required
- Year 2 – 92% required
- Year 3 – 94% required

We support them to achieve their targets – tweaking processes to reduce timescales without raising costs for customers. We will workshop the next contracts

with contractors to see how we can further improve customer experience.

Improving reinstatement turnaround times means customers have access to their roads and driveways sooner, something which they've told us is important.

Stop, thief!

Money recovered from unregistered gas consumption ultimately goes back to our customers – we continue to place a high value on our efforts, which our stakeholders endorse.

We **settled 44 cases in 2017/18**, the same number as in the previous year, and **recovered more than £540,000** – around £2 million over the GD1 period. We're the leading GDN at dealing with theft of gas and have an experienced team focused in this area with robust procedures to support them.

Larger value recoveries are usually for commercial premises, but sometimes cases involve domestic customers, some in vulnerable situations, so we have a procedure that's sympathetic to individual needs. We aim to resolve cases amicably – all settlement amounts to date haven't required court action.

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

We have depots across Wales and the south west of England and always look for ways to reduce colleague travelling and be more productive.

We've invested in Microsoft's Surface Hub software – this interactive team collaboration program links colleagues across our network, enabling video and presentation sharing and virtual meetings

and reducing a great deal of travel time.

The new system is compatible with the Smart Rooms system we installed previously and is already proving worthwhile, adding a further eight sites to the virtual network, which has already shown its value. Around 20 colleagues in Wrexham and Colwyn Bay are **forecast to save**

approximately £112,000, removing nearly 3,000 hours' worth of travel time and reducing travelling by around 105,000 miles, which has a knock-on environmental benefit too.

Surface Hub's effectiveness will be evaluated to check it's working as expected. We will then consider further investment in it.

fast facts

95% of reinstatements completed in D+48 v 85% GDN average

Prevented more than 90 cyber attacks following an increase in number of calls reported

Recovered more than £540,000 of stolen gas

Forecast to save around £112,000 following introduction of Surface Hubs

CYBER SECURITY

Our stakeholders agree with us that, as an energy infrastructure provider, it's essential our IT systems are resilient, reliable and adaptable to the constantly changing nature of risk.

We've **invested in cyber risk management**, developing our people and technology to make sure we're aware of threats and can respond accordingly.

Last year, we invested in the Security Information Event Management system, which captures, analyses and logs huge

volumes of data, allowing us to prioritise. Still in its infancy, it's already giving us a better understanding of risks to our systems.

We **issued training materials to more than 1,400 colleagues** to help them recognise security risks and know what to do if they witness risky activity. And we **provided e-learning training to more than 530 colleagues**. As a result,

we've seen more colleagues logging service desk calls and raising concerns about risky activity.



Designing

OUR FUTURE

We'll continue to invest in our people and engage with policymakers so we have the skills, confidence and innovative thinking to build our business long into the future.

Some things that stakeholders told us...

Promote the alternative gas agenda to key stakeholders and landowners

Continue investing in apprenticeships and collaborate on innovation with universities and academia

Look for new and innovative ways to improve services

We've done...

- **Industry-first collaborative project** to help decarbonise heat, promoted to key stakeholders
- **Recruited 23 apprentices – total now 159**
- Introduced innovative solutions to improve customer experience

fast facts

Amended the way we calculate long-term forecasts for gas, in response to changing energy landscape

Led an industry-first project on potential solutions to decarbonising heat

MODELLING THE FUTURE

As the energy mix becomes more complex, with more renewable sources of energy and peaking plants, the way we calculate long-term forecasts for gas and the related infrastructure demand has had to change.

The previous process relied on a number of predictable variables, but that has changed, so we needed to introduce a new way of working out what future energy needs look like.

Alongside renewable energy and peaking plants, we're taking into account

Leading the way to decarbonising heat

FREEDOM TO SOLVE ENERGY TRILEMMA

We're helping solve the energy trilemma of delivering an affordable, secure and low-carbon energy system, with the full support of our stakeholders. And we're leading an industry-first, cross-sector collaboration project to help us achieve that.

We're working on the Flexible Residential Energy Efficiency, Demand Optimisation & Management (Freedom) project⁴ with Western Power Distribution and PassivSystems – alongside partners Delta-ee, Imperial College and City University.

The project started in autumn 2016, and throughout 2017/18 has **delivered key outcomes that will help us design a future energy system for all – especially customers in vulnerable situations.**

Based in Bridgend, Freedom investigates hybrid heating systems, where houses have a standard gas boiler and an air source heat pump (ASHP), with a smart controller deciding the cheapest, most energy efficient source for heat at any given time. The gas boiler would be used for heating when there's excessive demand on the electricity grid, power is expensive, intermittent generation has low output or it is very cold, with the ASHP used at all other times.

Trial results show how hybrid systems are able to decarbonise domestic heat through an efficient balance of renewable gas and electricity at the lowest possible cost for consumers. It could already benefit off-gas-grid areas who pay more for their heat and where electricity networks are most constrained. Hybrid solutions in off-gas-grid areas would provide financial savings now and be future ready for smart control and 'heat as a service'.

Freedom takes properties as they are and makes the most of existing utility infrastructure, which avoids costly electricity network reinforcement, deep insulation retrofits within buildings and replacement of high temperature wet heating systems – saving the consumer money, reducing their impact on the environment and avoiding significant in-home disruption.

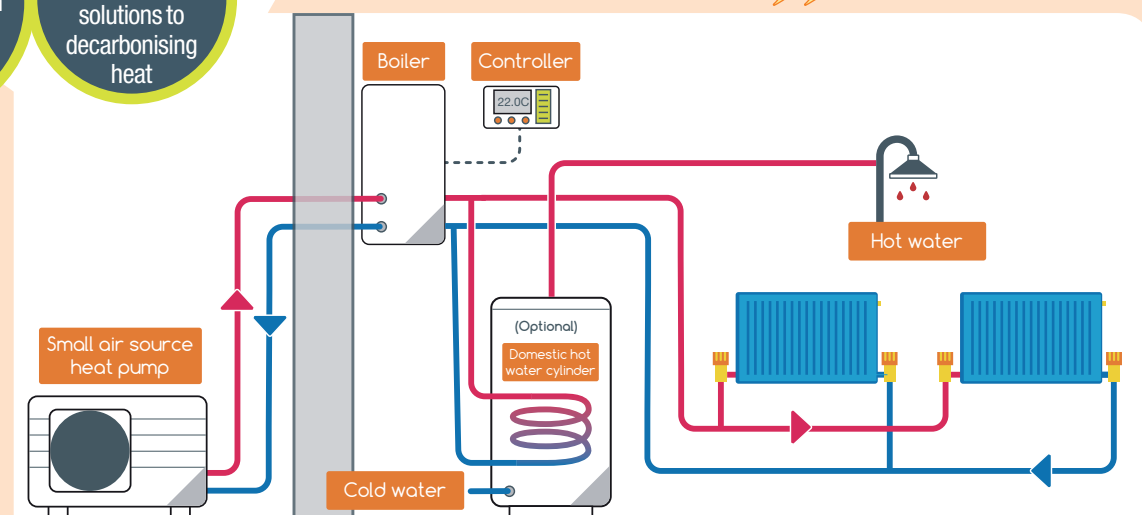
We've **shared the results of our work with stakeholders, including policymakers, BEIS and fuel poverty charity National Energy Action (NEA)**, which was pleased we took into account a solution that had the least impact on the customer, especially those in the most vulnerable situations.

Having seen a demonstration of the Freedom Project, and considering NEA's own experience of this technology, I believe hybrid heating systems are one of the sustainable tools available for decarbonising domestic heating. The technology promises to provide a modern and affordable way of heating properties of those people in fuel poverty. A carefully configured and managed system may also provide network operators with a powerful tool to help manage their distribution systems with minimal impact on the end users.

Technical Development Manager, National Energy Action



Freedom Project



the likelihood of more gas and electric vehicles being used in future, which could place more demands on our capacity.

We've **completed phase one of a project to redesign our forecasting model,**

looking at loads at a more granular level and allowing us to input different scenarios to see what our capacity, storage and compression requirements would be for each one. We're **leading this work and have shared the model with other GDNs**

and, as part of phase two, we'll be working with them to gather more information and get a more consistent view.

Collaboration is important as all GDNs' Long Term Development Statements, due for submission in

October 2018, will form the basis of their business plans for GD2. **Working together will provide validation that our model works and demonstrate our joined-up approach to future energy requirements.**

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/wwutilities/videos/1649416538475051/>

Creating the workforce of the future

PRIORITISING SKILLS

Regional workshop feedback supported skills investment as a high priority to make sure that safety standards and skill levels are maintained and improved. Being a member of our sector skills council – Energy & Utility Skills, ensures that we're able to measure ourselves against industry standards and share learning and best practice.

Our focus on recruitment and development has always been a priority but we've worked with Energy & Utility Skills to identify

ways to support local initiatives such as helping those 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET). **One of the things we're most proud of is removing barriers to entry for our apprenticeships** by taking away the requirements for academic achievements where possible.

Approximately **20% of our applicants came from groups who would have previously been deemed ineligible** to apply and this was one of the reasons that we were awarded CIPD Wales' Best Apprenticeship Programme Award in October 2017. We **recruited a further 23 apprentices** (some

of whom are pictured, right) in 2017 as part of our workforce planning to meet regulatory and customer demands, **taking our total to 159 recruits.**

Our approach to training and development puts customers at the heart of everything so we took the decision to **train all of our emergency engineers in Smart Metering techniques – more than 230 in total.**

This means that our customer-facing colleagues are able to better identify and resolve meter issues, despite the rollout being supplier-led, and was in



response to stakeholder feedback at our regional workshops which said that we should do everything we can to be able to advise and help customers.

PEOPLE POWER

To benchmark our processes against industry standards, we sought Investors in People (IiP) accreditation – **achieving Silver in May 2017 on our first attempt, something only 5% of companies achieve.**

This followed in-depth independent auditing of our people practice, including face-to-face interviews, an all-staff survey and IiP audit of all our data and processes.

The accreditation is testament to our ambition of becoming an employer

of choice and will help us continually improve. **ICS research shows there's a link between employee engagement and customer satisfaction**, so this will ultimately help us deliver better customer service too.

fast facts

Recruited 23 new apprentices

Rolled out innovative tools to improve the customer experience

Forged partnerships with universities to identify innovative solutions

A clear focus on innovation

One of our stakeholder priorities is innovation, so we make sure we invest and collaborate to improve customer experience and reduce costs.

LAUNCHPAD TO SUCCESS

Our CFP members said we should increase our engagement with academia. We've submitted challenges to Falmouth University, as part of its Launchpad initiative, one on scheduling and planning systems. If selected, we'll support students for two hours a month to help them develop solutions which will help improve our own business processes, improving stakeholder service.

WHERE THEORY MEETS PRACTICE

By linking with academia, we better understand university thinking and help them keep up to date. Working with Cardiff University on their Energy Networks and Systems course, we showed them one of our projects into the behaviour of power generators was already happening.

One lecturer spent time at our offices researching a Springer Guide on the future of energy, due to be published in July 2018.

SEPARATIONS

When installing smart meters in a commercial contract, we found electricity and gas meters were too close together.

We've trialled separation boards and blankets that create a barrier between the meters so there's no risk of arcing electricity and can now complete jobs in one visit, providing better customer service and reducing engineer on-site time.

SEAL OF APPROVAL

We're trialling an aerospace repair solution, Duraseal, to repair pipework and reduce the number of supply interruptions.

Previously, using Denso tape required constant monitoring and was often not appropriate anyway.

The Duraseal trial has so far proven a safer interim solution while we can arrange a customer-convenient time to do a permanent fix. This means fewer cut-offs and fewer payments for disruption to service.

DAMAGE LIMITATION

Highways authorities told us our reinstatement works were causing scarring to roads due to contact with our equipment. We incur fines for the damage and had to re-lay road surfaces, at more expense and disruption.

We've introduced plastic protective barriers for our equipment and are trialling the solution in Gloucester until August 2018. Early feedback is encouraging and UK Power Networks has asked us to share our solution.

WATER DIVINER

'PipeCheck 2' equipment identifies if pipes contain water or gas, similar to ultrasound. Previously, we relied on utilities' plans, local knowledge, or drilling a main to find out its contents.

This technology will de-risk 'test for live' jobs and avoid unnecessary damage to water mains.

SATELLITE PINPOINTING

We've worked with AMT-SYBEX and Leica Geosystems to build a new mobile solution to map new pipelines.

Using high-precision GPS equipment, we can measure and map the exact location of pipes to the centimetre – as each new pipe is laid. It also captures the location of valves, junctions and other components.

Now our engineers spend less time site mapping new pipelines, with no post pipe-laying data inputting required – this is better value for us and, ultimately, our customers.

FUTURE FOCUS

- GD2 Consumer Consultation Campaign
- National GDN & NGT collaborative engagement programme
- Summer Consumer GD2 and Customer Service Focus Groups
- Welsh Government Partnership event
- Freedom hybrid heating trial result
- Review of Priority (Vulnerable) Customer Strategy and initiatives in line with Sustainability First's *Energy for all – Innovate for all* report, and in conjunction with our partners

