

Together we have the energy to transform our communities

# Our Consumer Vulnerability Activity and the Outcomes we Have Delivered

Part Three

Ofgem Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive 2021/22



Electricity North West Limited  
Registered number 02366949

**electricity**  
north west  
Bringing energy to your door

# Welcome to our Part Three submission to Ofgem's Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) Incentive for the year 2021/22.

Electricity North West is one of 14 distribution network operators (DNOs) in Great Britain regulated by Ofgem. As the only single licence DNO group (out of six groups) we are proud to champion our 2.4 million customers across the region.

Our purpose – "Together we have the energy to transform our communities" – reflects the essential role we play in changing the lives of our customers and communities in the North West.

**OUR WORLD**  
What the North West needs  
Cleaner, greener energy to enable and enhance 21st century life in the North West

**PURPOSE**  
What we do  
Manage energy to meet the needs of our customers and communities

**REASON FOR BEING**

2021/22 is the seventh year of the eight-year regulatory framework set by Ofgem which drives network companies to engage proactively with stakeholders to anticipate their needs and deliver a consumer-focused, socially-responsible and sustainable energy service.

## Our 2021/22 submission

Part 1: Our stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability strategies. This outlines our strategic approach to engaging and working with stakeholders and supporting those in vulnerable circumstances.

Part 2: Our stakeholder engagement activity and the outcomes we have delivered.

Part 3: Our consumer vulnerability activity and the outcomes we have delivered.

## Our region

We're responsible for operating, maintaining, repairing, renewing, and reinforcing 13,000 km of overhead power lines and more than 44,000 km of underground electricity cables across Cumbria, Lancashire, and Greater Manchester.



In response to 2020/21 Panel feedback we have made a concerted effort to improve the presentation of our submission this year, with enhanced font size, minimal capitalisation, appropriate colour contrast, and greater contextualisation of statistics. We aim to demonstrate quality and impact rather than focusing on quantity of engagement.

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- 7 Delivering joined-up services with trusted partners
- 8 Tackling fuel poverty

## Case study key

The following symbols found throughout our report highlight our 2021/22 activities.

- New**  
Initiatives which were introduced this year
- Enhanced**  
Examples of where we have improved our approach since last year
- Embedded**  
Successful initiatives entrenched in our business
- Hard-to-reach**  
Initiatives which best serve the specific interests of under-represented stakeholders
- Innovative**  
Novel or leading practice, based on benchmarking, for industry replication
- Scaling-up**  
Initiatives that will soon or are already reaching significantly more consumers than before

## Glossary

The table below includes a list of acronyms used widely throughout Part 3 of the report.

Acronym	Meaning
CLASS	Customer Load Active System Services
DNO	Distribution Network Operator
ED1	Electricity Distribution 1 (2015-2023)
ED2	Electricity Distribution 2 (2023-2028)
PSR	Priority Services Register
UU	United Utilities
WSC	Worst Served Customer



## Consumer vulnerability pillars

- 1 Build and maintain a resilient network
- 2 Use data to understand vulnerability challenges
- 3 Continuously improve customer contact data
- 4 Deliver tailored support to Priority Services Register (PSR) customers
- 5 Work with partners to tackle fuel poverty

This year, because of the joint efforts of our colleagues and partners, I am proud that we have reached a significantly higher number of customers and made more of a difference to every individual supported.

In a turbulent year, unstable commodity prices have caused huge rises in the cost of gas, oil and living in general. We have continued to do everything within our power to keep our costs stable to support the **affordability of all consumers' bills**, at the same time as driving continuous improvement in the range and accessibility of our support services, especially for those who are disproportionately impacted by the changes occurring.

Building on the significant progress we made last year, our aim has been to enhance the impact we have on customers' lives by delivering greater value from our services, at no additional cost to bill payers. Our Board, informed by their Consumer Vulnerability Champion Anne Baldock, reviewed our strategy which is aligned to **Ofgem's 2019 strategy** to deliver fair and positive outcomes for consumers in vulnerable circumstances. At the heart of our strategy is a strategic goal, supported by five pillars that we test and refine through **centrally coordinated and locally delivered engagement**.

In Advisory Panel meetings stakeholders made me acutely aware of the heightened anxiety that exists across the North West region, associated with the cost of living. Therefore, our commitment to reach all

## Strategic goal

Providing an inclusive and supportive service for all users of electricity in a rapidly changing world - recognising the need to maximise the reach of our services through collaborative, innovative working with a community of trusted partners across our region.

250,000 fuel-poor customers by the end of ED2 is at the forefront of our plans. Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, we also understand the elevated need for mental wellbeing support, both for colleagues and customers. The culture of our organisation continues to mature through partner led training and engagement which is bringing to life the reality of challenges our customers are facing daily for all our colleagues.

I was an Incident Manager during Storm Arwen and saw first-hand how critical it is to improve network and community resilience in extreme weather to prevent any customer unduly suffering in darkness and cold circumstances. The initiatives on **page four** improve the reliability of our network, reduce disruption and stress to our customers' lives, without them having to take any action. The changes electricity users are experiencing on the journey to net zero continue to evolve and provide an opportunity for us to learn and do more. As part of our focus on preventing **hard-to-reach** groups being left behind, leading edge programmes such as our Girlguiding partnership promote

inclusion among future generations and a wide range of customer groups.

Working in partnership enables us to pool resources, technology, and best practices to remove organisational silos. With our partners we have proven that together we can reach more customers, deliver bigger benefits for the customer and be more efficient to stretch our funds further. In our case studies we have used a five-year basis, aligning to the duration of future price controls, and have provided a pie chart icon to indicate the share of costs (orange segment) relative to benefits (blue represents social benefits and pink for financial benefits) delivered.

We have also provided macro level breakdowns for our Part Three initiatives over one, five, and ten years in the table below:

Part 3 SECV case studies	Net value delivered
2021/22 Average SROI	£23.42
2021/22 Net present value (NPV)	£23.2m
NPV over 5 years	£178.4m
NPV over 10 years	£364.7m

It is my privilege to lead the social programmes outlined in these pages and I would like to thank stakeholders for their enduring support and partnership.

## Co-ordinating communications across utilities

HARD-TO-REACH EMBEDDED INNOVATIVE

### What we heard

In our fuel poverty mindsets research, consumers said they are more likely to change their consumption behaviour if they can achieve larger financial savings across energy and water bills. Our delivery partners The Bread and Butter Thing, Family Action and Ingeus challenged us to expand regional cross-utility initiatives to share ideas, best practice, insight and avoid duplication of effort.

### What we did

We expanded collaboration with Utilities Together members, Northern Gas Network (NGN), United Utilities (UU) and Cadent Gas by **scaling-up** our co-funded and highly successful pharmacy bag awareness campaign. The initiative is targeted to **hard-to-reach** communities and combines the promotion of the PSR on the front and back of prescription bags, with access to energy and water efficiency advice via enclosed leaflets. By growing our reach from 200 pharmacies to 350, the volume of bags increased from 200,000 up to 700,000 and

leaflets from 60,000 to 105,000. We further expanded collaboration by:

- Developing and publishing a combined energy and water saving booklet (Picture right) which provides joined-up advice and is being widely promoted by all companies and our partners.
- Rolling out Cadent's Blue Flame Accredited programme of carbon monoxide training for our frontline operatives as part of our 'switched on to vulnerability' programme (see **page three**)
- Adopting NGN's 'Project DoorStop' **innovation** which allows customers to instantly verify the identity of a doorstep visit from one of our colleagues through a link to our website.
- Leading the first region-wide trial of a single PSR (see **page five**).



## Stakeholder outcomes

- ✓ Since 2019 the pharmacy campaign has reached over 1.5m consumers (30% of the region).
- ✓ It is a cost-effective method of raising awareness and membership of the PSR and tells consumers how they can make direct financial savings across all their utilities bills, and other help that is available to them.

Over 5 years, collaborating more closely with other utilities will create **£39.14 social value per £1 spent**, and continuing our pharmacy campaign will deliver **£30.97 social value in excess of every £1 spent**.

In this section we provide an overview of a diverse range of high impact initiatives which encapsulate our consumers' and wider stakeholders' priorities and were developed following inclusive, meaningful and proportionate engagement.

2021/22 performance highlights

**Pillar 1**  
Build and maintain a resilient network

**£3.8m of CLASS revenue shared with customers in ED1 to reduce bills**

**Pillar 2**  
Use data to understand vulnerability challenges

**90% PSR customer satisfaction**

★★★★★

**Pillar 3**  
Continuously improve customer contact data

**124,283 new registrations, reducing the PSR gap to 47%**

**Pillar 4**  
Deliver tailored support to our PSR customers

**Pharmacy campaign reaches 1.5m consumers – 30% of the north west**

**Pillar 5**  
Work with partners to tackle fuel poverty

**36,487 referrals deliver outstanding £4.6m social value**

2021/22 initiatives

The table below highlights the net economic benefit per £ spent\* (measured over a five-year period) associated with a selection of new, embedded, and innovative initiatives across each of our stakeholder priorities.

Strategic business priorities	Initiative name	Page	Maturity				Net SROI
			New this year	Embedded	Innovative	Hard-to-reach	
1. Build and maintain a resilient network	<b>CLASS could save customers up to £100 million over the next 25 years</b> - 30,506 MWh capacity released to balance the UK electricity grid	4	✓	✓	✓	✓	£21.13
	<b>On track to ensure no customers are 'worst-served' by 2023</b> - Just 774 of our 2.4m customers are worst served, a 49% decrease since 2015/16	4	✓	✓	✓	✓	£0.80
	<b>Thinking beyond our assets to protect communities from storms</b> - Infrared cameras and updated emergency plans will save lives	4	✓			✓	£6.09
2. Use data to understand vulnerability challenges	<b>PSR services enhanced to reflect current and future members' needs</b> - Improvements to 12 welfare support services provided during planned and unplanned power cuts	5		✓		✓	90% PSR Satisfaction
	<b>Partnerships aligned to future trends in vulnerability</b> - 47 data sets reduce key risks identified in top 10 investment areas - Targeted support reaches 307,123 vulnerable customers (advice to 287,751 and tailored interventions to 19,372)	5		✓	✓	✓	Reduced risk
3. Continuously improve customer contact data	<b>Driving industry-wide change in PSR data collection</b> - First ever multi-utility whole-region trial of a single PSR	6	✓		✓	✓	Greater inclusion
	<b>Refreshing customer contact data</b> - 124,283 new PSR customers registered - 806,300 (77%) PSR members proactively contacted	6		✓			£26.34
4. Deliver tailored support to our PSR customers	<b>Co-ordinating activities across North West utilities companies</b> - Pharmacy campaign scaled-up to reach 1.5m consumers	1		✓	✓	✓	£30.97
	<b>Raising awareness of the PSR among hard-to-reach groups</b> - Community radio expands PSR reach to 10,921 listeners in isolated communities - GPs signpost support available to patients via a 'request for help' card	7	✓	✓		✓	£9.53
	<b>Youth ambassadors tackle behaviour change in hard-to-reach areas</b> - Local businesses respond to young people's calls for climate action	7	✓			✓	£8.52
5. Work with partners to tackle fuel poverty	<b>Designing digital services to minimise risk</b> - Digital advice bot replicated by Citizens Advice Manchester	8	✓		✓	✓	£7.44
	<b>On-the-ground energy champions break-down barriers</b> - Queue busting engagement technique sparks interest in energy efficiency	8	✓		✓	✓	£13.73
	<b>Increasing our understanding of fuel poverty mindsets</b> - Powerup campaign helps 75% feel more in control of energy bills	9		✓	✓	✓	£37.97
	<b>Collaboration with partners creates a flourishing referral network</b> - 24,223 of north west fuel-poor customers reached since 2017	9		✓	✓	✓	£27.71

The table below highlights important impacts on our policies, procedures, business plans, and organisational culture influenced by stakeholder engagement.

Business priority	Initiative name	Page	Maturity				Net SROI
			New this year	Embedded	Innovative	Hard-to-reach	
Enhancing our culture	<b>Embedding a culture of spotting and acting on vulnerability</b> - 100% of workforce trained and switched on to spotting the signs - New PSR App makes it easier than ever for colleagues to make referrals	3		✓	✓	✓	£2.51
	<b>Enhanced workforce resilience keeps our customers lives' running</b> - 96% of our workforce remained available throughout the pandemic	3		✓	✓	✓	£5.05

\*The total Net Present Value (all benefits minus all costs), divided by the cost of the initiative.

By giving our people the right skills and tools, as well as strong guiding principles, we have fostered a culture of executive-led engagement and embedded consumer vulnerability support in our organisation. The initiatives described in this section show some of the ways we have been able to raise awareness, improve the quality and responsiveness of our approach, and better serve our communities.

Embedding a culture of spotting and acting on vulnerability

HARD-TO-REACH EMBEDDED INNOVATIVE

What we heard

Last year, in response to our partner the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) highlighting the increased risk of child abuse during the pandemic, our frontline colleagues undertook specialist training to help them recognise and report abuse. Operational colleagues became strong advocates, requesting an ongoing training programme to help them spot a wider range of vulnerable circumstances and characteristics and improved systems for reporting observations. In our **planning for the future** engagement, Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel members challenged us to **scale-up** existing vulnerability awareness and education training to the entire workforce.

What we did

This year we rolled-out a company-wide 'switched on to vulnerability' training programme. The first in a series of linked 60-minute modules contrasted vulnerable circumstances typically seen by society (e.g. age, disability) with characteristics frequently unseen (e.g. bereavement, no internet access). **The training was completed by**

**2,086 (100%) of colleagues** in just three months, an enhancement on previous years where it was targeted at those in customer facing roles. To embed a **switched-on culture**, we expanded partner-led training and **internal knowledge sharing**, providing monthly case studies of learning being successfully applied through team briefings.

To make it easier and faster for colleagues to refer a customer for welfare support, our IT team developed a bespoke PSR referral app. Early engagement with colleagues helped us identify user requirements for the app and iteratively test and improve a prototype, which has been rolled-out to over 900 operational colleagues. Once downloaded, the app gives immediate access to:

- Support to self-manage conversations with electricity users in vulnerable circumstances.
- Registration to the PSR (initiating a call-back from our Customer Team to finalise the application).
- Direct dial access to our specialist Welfare Team if urgent support is required.

Our partners below delivered 10 training sessions to our workforce in 2021/22



What we will do next

**Jill Hendry, Engagement and Partnership Business Lead, said:** "We will monitor colleagues' app utilisation to establish which teams are engaging in welfare support and which may need additional training. In ED2 we forecast the number of referrals to our partners via colleagues will **scale-up** from 5,250 to over 10,000 per year."

Enhanced workforce resilience keeps our customers' lives running

HARD-TO-REACH EMBEDDED INNOVATIVE

What we heard

This year members of our Public Panel shared that the prolonged uncertainty and continuous health threat caused by COVID-19 was inducing fatigue and a range of complex emotions in their households. In peer-to-peer **knowledge sharing** our call advisors detected that this fatigue was translating into an elevated need to treat customers with empathy and provide emotional support. Our Customer Director **shared learning** with our Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel whose members reported observing similar trends and suggested amplifying training on emerging mental wellbeing risks linked to the impacts of changing circumstances.

What we did

This year we embedded our proactive approach to managing mental health, through prevention, raising awareness and reducing stigma. We recognised the increased pressure on colleagues to manage change, whilst providing increased care for customers in our 'Future Workplace Project', which in its first phase enabled more flexible and supportive working arrangements.

Our initiatives included:

- Delivering interpersonal awareness training to 100% of our Executive Leadership Team.
- Following **'Manage the Conversation Training'**, delivered by our strategic partner Mates in Mind to our leadership team (13% of our workforce), scaling-up mental first aid training to 100% of colleagues with the support of the British Safety Council.
- Nurturing cognitive empathy to understand how colleagues and customers feel in different circumstances and how to offer the best response, with kindness.
- Supporting 52 Mental Wellbeing Champions facilitate over 16,000 conversations with colleagues across the business about their wellbeing needs.
- Launching a bespoke app to enable champions to log their activity (whilst protecting colleague anonymity) and confidence in managing conversations.
- Providing every line manager with a new wellbeing information toolbox and making free counselling available to all colleagues.

Yvonne Frost, Fault Technician Delivery Manager, said:



"The training made me see more clearly that it is people 'just like us' that need help from time to time. While carrying out repairs during Storm Arwen, I called at a property that had no power and was concerned for a householder who had recently fallen in his home. I used the app to request urgent assistance from the Welfare Team who, via the Multi-Agency Incident Command, confirmed he had recently discharged himself from hospital. I was relieved to hear arrangements had been made for a paramedic to visit and assess the customer's wellbeing and I then felt able to continue with urgent repairs."

Stakeholder outcomes

- ✓ Support opportunities are being maximised, with engineers using the app and conversations managed by our call advisors contributing 5,520 referrals to partners.

**Over 5 years, colleague support referrals to the PSR, our partners and social services will create £2.51 social value in excess of every £1 spent.**

Stakeholder outcomes



Stakeholder outcomes

- ✓ 96% of our workforce remained available throughout the pandemic.
- ✓ In our October 2021 Employee Climate Survey, 74% of 1,483 participants said their wellbeing is supported.
- ✓ Colleague reporting of mental ill-health has increased by 7% since 2018 and those seeking support from our Employee Assistance Programme increased from 3% to 10% during the same period.
- ✓ Call advisors demonstrating greater awareness, emotional intelligence and compassion towards vulnerable customers influenced an overall call sentiment score of 93%.

**Over 5 years, with our colleagues' empathetic response to customers' needs will reduce their distress and creating £5.05 social value in excess of every £1 spent.**

This section illustrates some of the ways in which we are building resilience within vulnerable communities today and in the future and ensure that everyone can experience the benefits of the energy transition, at an affordable cost.

**CLASS could save customers up to £100 million over the next 25 years** HARD-TO-REACH EMBEDDED INNOVATIVE

**What we heard**

Our Chief Executive Advisory Panel considered whether, given external impacts such as the war in Ukraine and cost of living crisis, our priorities should change. Polled stakeholders held a consensus view that our continued focus on being one of the most cost-conscious and efficient DNOs should not compromise our ambition to **lead the transition to net zero**, as this is most likely to increase community resilience in the long-term. Our Public Panel agreed and suggested our focus should be on expanding the availability of innovation projects such as Customer Load Active System Services (CLASS), and ensuring vulnerable consumers everywhere can access the benefits.

**What we did**

We reviewed our innovation portfolio and reinvested £12m of efficiencies to expand the roll-out of CLASS, a low-cost voltage control solution, across 257 of our primary substations (reaching 1.7 million customers) and integrated it into our Network Management System. This enabled National Grid's control room to activate CLASS 775 times (on average) per month during 2021/22. We shared £2.8m (42%) of the revenue generated with customers. CLASS is a whole systems approach to enabling net zero but is not 'business as usual' for DNOs. Several network operators across the USA, Europe and Australia expressed interest in replicating CLASS and are now moving to trial it on

their networks. This has been made possible through the **intellectual property rights being shared freely with all DNOs**.

**Stakeholder outcomes**

- ✓ By rolling out innovation projects such as CLASS and being efficient, we have delivered everything we said we would in ED1 £93m under budget, keeping consumers' bills lower.
- ✓ **Hard-to-reach** customers, such as the 'survival segment' from our fuel poverty mindset research, benefit without needing to actively engage.
- ✓ CLASS delivered 30,506 MWh of balancing services, a market share of 18%, up from 12% last year. It has balanced the UK electricity grid in a cheaper, lower carbon way.

**Over 5 years, CLASS will create £21.13 social value in excess of every £1 spent.**



**What we will do next**

**Sam Loukes, Vulnerability Inclusion Manager, said:** "The creation of my job role this year strengthened our commitment to horizon scanning, undertaking research to tackle new vulnerabilities and ensuring no one is left behind during the energy transition. To ensure our innovation projects continue to make benefits available to customer groups, our refreshed **Innovation Strategy** (2021), commits to carrying out a customer impact assessment for every innovation project."

**On track to ensure no customers are 'worst-served' by 2023** HARD-TO-REACH EMBEDDED INNOVATIVE

**Strategic context**

Our pioneering **Value of Lost Load (VoLL)** research has been shared and discussed with stakeholders at two consecutive Energy Networks Innovation Conferences. VoLL evidences that the financial and social impact of power cuts is highest amongst those who are fuel-poor, live in rural areas, or have adopted electric vehicles.

**What we did**

We committed to ensuring that none of our customers suffer a service that Ofgem would classify as 'worst-served' by the end of 2023 – **a DNO first**. Ofgem defines a Worst-Served Customer (WSC) as experiencing 12 or more high voltage power cuts over a three-year period, with at least three each year. We increased the frequency of WSC assessments from twice a year to quarterly and proactively identified customers at risk of becoming WSC. Rather than incorporating these schemes into longer term planned works, we obtained Board approval to reprioritise £1.3m of non-load-related expenditure which enabled our special projects team to deliver nine targeted reliability schemes.

**Stakeholder outcomes**

- ✓ This year just 774 (0.03%) of our 2.4m customers were WSC (a 49% decrease since 2015/16).
- ✓ **Hard-to-reach** customers directly benefit from our initiative without needing to actively engage.
- ✓ Improved reliability delivers wellbeing benefits for customers, including those most impacted by power cuts, feeling more in control of their lives, reducing stress and the need for GP visits.

**Over 5 years, eradicating WSC will create £0.80 social value in excess of every £1 spent.**

WSC schemes are highly targeted, making them less economically efficient. We identify cost-justified proposals over a longer period (45 years) using Ofgem's CBA model.



**What we will do next**

**Dan Randles, Head of Strategic Planning, said:** "The definition of a WSC will change from 2023 and with the standard raised, more customers will potentially qualify. We are the only DNO to extend our commitment to ensuring none of our customers are WSC by 2028. We will deliver a £20m targeted programme of enhancements across 26 rural circuits."

**Thinking beyond our assets to protect communities from storms** HARD-TO-REACH NEW

**What we heard**

As heavy rainfall on the River Mersey in February 2022 led to two severe flood warnings and a possible danger to life, our Public Panel asked us what we can do to support communities and voluntary groups who rely on investment to respond to a variety of situations.

**What we did**

We engaged with the voluntary Appleby Emergency Response Group to understand how we can assist communities impacted by, or at risk of, flooding. Appleby experienced 16 flood alerts and two floods in 2020/21. Historically the group relied upon information provided to them by rain gauges which 70 volunteers would periodically visit to 'watch' the river level during a storm. We provided the group with a specialist infrared camera which successfully enabled remote monitoring and risk management. Together we targeted residents identified as vulnerable in the group's Flood Plan with PSR information.

**Stakeholder outcomes**

- ✓ A replicable approach which raises awareness of the PSR, enables earlier detection of flood risk, prompt evacuation, and can save lives.

**Over 5 years, community storm resilience will create £6.09 social value in excess of every £1 spent.**

This section shows how we are using data to understand current and future trends in vulnerability across the North West, developing targeted awareness campaigns, refining the range of tailored services available to meet PSR members' needs and prioritising those who are most in need.

**PSR services enhanced to reflect current and future members' needs** HARD-TO-REACH EMBEDDED ENHANCED

**Context**

Stakeholders inform our classification of Ofgem's PSR Needs Codes into low, medium or high-risk categories, based upon the impact of a loss of electricity on vulnerable electricity users. This embedded approach informs our prioritisation of tailored partnerships and support services.

customers impacted by power cuts (281,108) to make sure they were coping okay and provided an automatic phone line directly routing those calling us first (23,799) to our welfare team.

We worked collaboratively with our delivery partners on PSR awareness raising activities, leveraging our own channels (e.g. website) and community networks such as GP surgeries and pharmacies. Partners targeted PSR groups underrepresented against the national average - notably mental health (MIND), chronic illness (British Heart Foundation) physical impairment (Scope) and pensionable age (Age UK). In tandem, we stepped-up our campaign to recruit high-risk customer segments, such as those medically dependent on electricity. Throughout incidents we asked these groups to make themselves known if they required additional support via our hashtag #MedENW.

**What we heard**

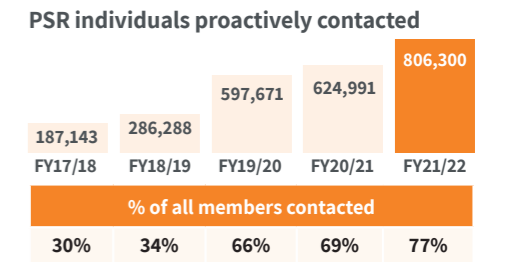
This year 233 stakeholders participated in a bespoke survey which evaluated 12 of our PSR support services. Responses from PSR members were combined with input from our Customer Voice feedback panel. 96% of participants said that enhanced communication during a power cut is the most useful benefit of PSR membership, particularly during the first six hours of power loss. After six hours, we heard that food provision and door knocking become equally important. Respondents said that we should advertise PSR services via Citizens Advice (66%), GP surgeries and pharmacies (63%), our website (57%) and social media (56%).

To enhance services to customers during power cuts we:

- Trialled on-the-go catering contracts, with 16 local providers who had the capacity to rapidly mobilise during Storm Arwen. This new process represented 15% of our annual investment in catering provision and enabled refreshments to be supplied which reflected local, cultural and dietary preferences. In tandem, a new process saw our mobile caterers make deliveries door-to-door to stranded customers unable to travel to designated pick-up points.
- Onboarded **Charis Shop**, a platform that enables our call advisors and delivery partners to issue support services to customers immediately. Services included emergency credit, supermarket vouchers and smart LED bulbs which provide light for 4 hours without electricity and recharge when power is restored. Through **sharing knowledge**, Northern Gas Networks replicated this approach.
- Reprioritised the activities of 70 colleagues to check on the wellbeing of 5,250 customers experiencing long power cuts in isolated communities, in-person, during Storm Arwen.

**What we did**

We developed agile working practices to **scale-up** proactive contact with PSR members this year. We exceeded the performance targets set by our Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel (see below) to reach 77% (806,300) of members. We also shared 200,894 proactive weather alerts ahead of storms, spoke to all high category



Reach of proactive contact (% of members)	Vulnerability categorisation		
	High	Medium	Low
<b>Our annual targets</b>	100%	33%	33%
<b>Contacts delivered</b>	✓ 100%	✓ 37%	✓ 37%

**Stakeholder outcomes**

- ✓ 90% overall satisfaction among PSR members with respect to 12 beneficial support services.
- ✓ Reduced risk of leaving vulnerable electricity users behind through targeted awareness campaigns.
- ✓ Campaigns generated 128,830 new individual members in five underrepresented categories and 49,334 new high priority members – 36% of this year's overall intake.

**Partnerships aligned to future trends in vulnerability** HARD-TO-REACH EMBEDDED INNOVATIVE

**What we heard**

During planning for the future-themed engagement, our Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel challenged us to critically evaluate the impact of the vaccination programme locally, and review emerging and future challenges, including 'long COVID' and the affordability of consumers' energy bills.

been able and willing to access it – with vaccination hesitancy most pronounced among young people, ethnic minorities, and those in fuel poverty. The number of people without digital skills and access had reduced, but there remained a sharper digital divide for those who remain and are **hard-to-reach**. Evidence of inequalities widening for low-income households influenced our decision to expand support offers to this group, in addition to targeting young and isolated people most at risk of escalating mental health impacts. We used our social data mapping tool (47 data sets), to establish localities with the greatest prevalence of

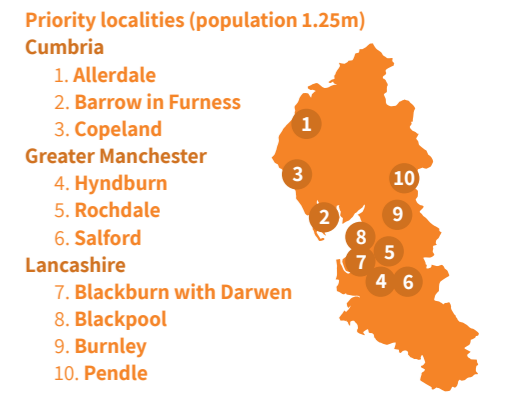
vulnerability. We combined stakeholder prioritised criteria (low income, pensionable age, physical disability, PSR gap and power cut incidence), with the prevalence of fuel poverty and long COVID. The results showed future vulnerability will be concentrated in the same ten areas identified last year. So, we redoubled our efforts, working alongside six long-term strategic partners and 43 new partners, to make a real difference in these localities.

**What we did**

We undertook a 'six-months on' follow-up to our 2020/21 COVID-19 study, which highlighted those contracting COVID-19 were now less physically vulnerable due to the vaccination programme - if they had

**Stakeholder outcomes**

- ✓ 85% of our £436,000 partnership investment was allocated to 10 priority areas. 307,123 customers received advice (287,751), or further interventions (19,372). This represents a 35% year-on-year increase in the reach of our partner-led support.
- ✓ Our proactive and place-based strategy established in 2020 is working well. Using data to inform our partners' activities has increased PSR membership from 59% to 65% in the 10 most impacted areas, ensuring support services reach consumers in greatest need.



Our robust PSR data collection processes mean that we can report membership at both an individual and at a property level. However, to assist stakeholders making direct comparisons between our membership base and other DNOs, our SECV update is at a property level. On 1st April 2021 over 39% of the North West, 1.1 million properties, were eligible for the PSR. Among this group, 42% were registered, leaving a gap of 58%. This section evidences a range of initiatives that have enabled us to grow our PSR membership, whilst honouring a Business Plan commitment to keep our PSR up-to-date and accurate.

Driving industry-wide change in PSR data collection

HARD-TO-REACH ENHANCED INNOVATIVE

Strategic context

Since our ground-breaking data sharing with UU commenced in 2018, we have been at the forefront of driving industry-wide change. We engage at a national level where the scale of change and potential partners required to unify multiple registers are under review by a Customer Safeguarding Working Group.

What we heard

During deliberative engagement our Public Panel expressed frustration at the pace of industry change towards the provision of a national PSR service with a single point of contact. In the near-term they challenged us to develop greater coordination within the North West and robustly demonstrate that a single PSR can share information between utilities and third sector providers which can then be rolled out nationally.

What we did

We acted to remove the risk of exclusion of **hard-to-reach** people who are not able to self-advocate by changing our lawful basis for PSR data collection from explicit consent to substantial public interest. Fully in line with regulatory requirements, while safeguarding children and individuals at risk, we agreed with UU to coordinate this change and aligned our privacy notice, colleague training and customer notification. Auriga Services launched a PSR portal in October 2020, enabling customers and their advocates to enter their details just once. We are leading a trial of this portal with our Utilities Together partner UU. To enable piloting, we invested extra resources, time and care to create a highly secure IT interface that connects the Auriga portal to our systems and protects personal and sensitive data.

Stakeholder outcomes

- ✓ No one is left behind through regulatory restrictions of the lawful basis for data collection.
- ✓ Ease of access to the portal provides an inclusive channel for all safeguarding and service providers to give more support to their service users.

**A regional 'one-stop-shop' PSR approach will drive efficiencies for companies responding to network incidents (such as storms or flooding) together and improved service for customers who only need to register once.**

What we will do next

**Jo Crinson, Customer and Community Development Manager, said:** "From our pilot, which is underway, we will review ease of system use and accessibility, accurate and timely transfer of data to all parties, data transfer compliance and the retention and removal of data from the Auriga portal. We will **share learning** with our network of third sector organisations and work collaboratively with DNOs towards **national replication** via the Energy Networks Association."



Refreshing customer contact data

EMBEDDED

What we heard

In our annual cycle of customer engagement, PSR members asked us to maintain regular contact with them to understand changes in their critical needs and **scale-up** awareness campaigns so that by 2028, at least 60% of eligible properties are registered.

What we did

We enhanced the PSR data we hold through a three-pronged strategy:

1. Enabling a one-stop shop for prospective members

We continued to use our embedded 'behind

the scenes' processes that ensure customers only have to register once through data sharing with UU and Cadent. Registrations through this mechanism increased seven-fold after September 2021 when UU changed its lawful basis for PSR data collection to substantial public interest.

2. Making every contact with our customers count

Our 'We're Switched On' approach means that as part of every contact our customer facing colleagues and our partners tell customers about the PSR and ask whether anyone in their household, or anyone they

know, would benefit from this service. In addition to targeted campaigns, we contacted 1.5m customers not currently on the PSR by letter (28%), email (52%) and SMS (20%) to raise awareness and increase the likelihood of registrations.

3. Proactively contacting PSR members

We proactively contacted 806,300 members to check the information we hold is still relevant and appropriate. We remove dormant profiles when we have received no response after three attempts to contact them over a period of three years. We provide a range of mechanisms for customers to leave the PSR including a pre-paid letter and envelope, an **online form**, chatbot, telephone and responding to SMS weather alerts (200,894 were sent before Storm Arwen).

Stakeholder outcomes

- ✓ At the start of the year the PSR gap was 637,202 eligible customers (58%). Net 124,283 new PSR customers this year (up from 69,046 last year), reducing our gap to (47%).
- ✓ Membership improves resilience to power cuts, including avoided distress, lost time and the need for primary healthcare support, delivering a total benefit of £12.1m this year.

**Over 5 years, recruiting customers to the PSR will create £26.34 social value in excess of every £1 spent.**

Our strategy to enhance our PSR data		2021/22	2020/21
Property registrations	<b>1. Enable a one stop shop for customers</b>		
	Two-way data share with energy suppliers	161,518	188,255
	Two-way data share with UU	21,663	6,776
	Data received from Cadent	415	347
	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>183,566 (-6%)</b>	195,378
	<b>2. Make every contact count</b>		
We're Switched On' campaign: additions	32,613	24,235	
Regional awareness campaigns	37,576	15,198	
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>70,189 (+78%)</b>	39,443	
Property removals	<b>3. Proactively contact members</b>		
	Dormant customers identified	-51,115	-95,232
	Opt-outs in response to proactive contact	-78,357	-70,553
	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>-129,472 (-22%)</b>	-165,765
<b>Net PSR (property) membership change</b>		<b>124,283 (+80%)</b>	<b>69,046</b>

We recognise that we are not always best placed to deliver the support our customers require. So, we identify trusted organisations to fill gaps that support our strategic plans. This year our focus has been on improving engagement with **hard-to-reach** communities.

Raising awareness of the PSR among hard-to-reach groups

NEW HARD-TO-REACH EMBEDDED

Strategic context

In our submission we adopt the **SECV Incentive Guidance** terminology 'hard-to-reach'. However, we acknowledge this puts the onus on the service user (e.g. "you are hard-to-reach"), when the barriers they face are often outside their control. An alternative perspective is that some electricity users are 'seldom heard' – referring to underrepresented people who use or might use services and who are less likely to be heard by decision makers.

What we heard

Health and social care consumer champion Healthwatch Lancashire enhanced our consumer segmentation model by overlaying the reasons people often struggle to access services. We heard that groups more likely to be digitally excluded than others often lack either the awareness, access, self-confidence and/or comprehension skills to engage via 'traditional' communication channels. Healthwatch challenged us to pilot more localised, tailored approaches to meet the unique needs of specific **hard-to-reach** communities. Healthwatch asserted that whilst some things are not scalable, they still deserve to be funded and replicated, where possible.

What we did

We invested £22,000 in a two-year pilot with Roch Valley Radio (RVR), a registered charity providing a radio service to unwell or isolated **hard-to-reach** communities in Bury, Rochdale and patients of Fairfield

General Hospital and Rochdale Infirmary. This enabled RVR to expand its broadcasting to 10,921 listeners (up from 8,746 last year) and integrate a continuous programme of PSR awareness building and messaging to spark interest in energy efficiency. RVR communicated 69 updates regarding unplanned power cuts and storms (Arwen and Barra) impacting the local area.

**Tim Moore, Head of Engagement, Roch Valley Radio, said:**



"We are the only community radio station in the area and our isolated listeners tell us that we have been a lifeline during COVID-19. Our show raised awareness of the PSR, food banks, pharmacy deliveries, befriending networks, financial services and changes to refuse collections. Our outreach activity overcomes barriers to the local community accessing our service, such as guiding people to purchase, setup and use an Alexa device to listen to our show."

To embed alternative engagement approaches into **hard-to-reach** communities our funded support to the Kendal Community Emergency Planning Group enabled the recruitment of 70 volunteers who worked with Kendal Integrated Care Community to identify clinically vulnerable people via GPs. A 'request for help' card was provided to patients at the point of contact, with

Youth ambassadors tackle behaviour change

NEW HARD-TO-REACH

What we heard

To ensure we maximise inclusion of future generations, a key **hard-to-reach** group, our on-the-ground delivery partners challenged us to expand upon our Girlguiding youth partnership (see Part Two, page six) with other replicable and scalable youth schemes.

What we did

We invested £19,000 in a partnership which enabled **Inspire Youth Zone Chorley** to recruit eight young energy ambassadors. Participants underwent two months of training, including education at our very own Training Academy. Youth workers and volunteers supported community junior (aged 8-12) and senior (aged 12-19) 'powerup' events, with fun activities aligned to key energy messages ('turn it off', 'old vs. new', 'carbon footprint', 'support networks' and 'business community') such as science experiments and designing a new '105 power cut' fridge magnet. Through more than 370 hours of outreach ambassadors conducted 666 individual engagements, reached over 500 young people and 25,105 wider community members via social media networks, including TikTok.

The young ambassadors were invited to Chorley Building Society to help them carry out an energy audit. In response, the Building Society agreed to promote our PSR booklet to customers, source more sustainable staff uniforms and increase its own operational energy efficiency. Chorley Car Group have since invited ambassadors to a meeting to discuss overcoming barriers that exist to adopting electric vehicles.

**Janine Blythe, Inspire Youth Zone Chief Executive, said:**



"Last year one of our ambassadors wouldn't leave his bedroom, was suffering acute anxiety and had low self-esteem. This programme has provided him with a purpose, connection, education and the confidence to give a remarkable speech in the presence of the speaker of the House of Commons."

volunteers on hand to carry out up to 300 requests per month for shopping, collecting prescriptions, walking dogs, posting mail or just being someone to chat to.

Stakeholder outcomes

- ✓ Radio communication enhanced the inclusivity of our communications and prevented isolated people feeling cut-off from support that is available to them. PSR membership in Bury and Rochdale rose from 73,879 in 2020/21 to 81,631 in 2021/22.
- ✓ Promoting neighbourliness in Cumbria (reach 58,000) and strengthening volunteer support networks reduced the risk that isolation and loneliness can have on mental and physical health.

**Over 5 years, raising awareness of the PSR and promoting neighbourliness will create £9.53 social value in excess of every £1 spent.**

What we will do next

**Paul Morris, Customer Relations Manager, said:**

"We will identify communities with similar characteristics (demographic profile and service barriers) to Bury and Rochdale and replicate the use of community radio to raise awareness of vital support services."

Stakeholder outcomes

- ✓ Youth ambassadors influence a new energy conscious generation from the ground-up, by imparting education and stimulating behaviour change among other citizens and the business community.
- ✓ Post-evaluation, 100% of young participants had learnt new skills, 75% felt that their self-confidence had improved and 62% reported being much happier - with a greater sense of belonging.
- ✓ Inspire Youth Zone Chorley is one of 13 youth centres (over half are in the North West), and with five further centres opening in 2022, the **growing franchise network** will enable us to **scale-up** in 2022/23.

**Over 5 years, youth energy ambassadors will create £8.52 social value in excess of every £1 spent.**

Aligned to our stakeholder priority of **ensuring the affordability of consumers' bills**, enhancements to our fuel poverty programme are guided by robust principles. This year our activities have expanded the reach of our support services and delivered a long-term sustainable impact, thereby delivering value for money.

**Embedded fuel poverty principles**



**Designing digital services to minimise risk**

**What we heard**

We collaborated with Scope to develop a custom-built **research panel** of people with disabilities and carers of children with disabilities. 632 panel members use their lived experience to review our website content, services and advice. One particularly impactful comment participants made was that **accessibility is about inclusivity, not disability**. With that, they challenged us to remove barriers for people that want to engage with us online and expand our investment in digital capabilities.

**What we did**

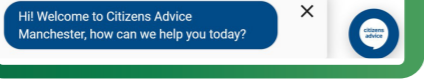
We worked with AbilityNet, experts in digital accessibility, to review our top 10 website pages by visitors, against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 criteria. Our key website pages and tools (i.e. power cuts, PSR, energy efficiency advice, chatbot and ReciteMe screen reader) were appraised and 22 actions identified. Key among them was ensuring all interactive pages and PDFs can be operated with a screen reader and reducing the complexity of language used, to align to regional literacy levels. To assist implementation of the action plan we became the **first DNO** to adopt **Silktime**, a real-time accessibility intelligence dashboard.

The tool empowered colleagues to iteratively scan our entire website, prioritise actions, set new policies (e.g. gender-neutral language) monitor our progress and benchmark comparable pages against other DNOs.

In 2021 we launched a chatbot on our **website** which allows customers who prefer to communicate in writing a convenient way to obtain information 24/7 and resolve issues quickly. In response to our Voice of the

**Rosi Avis, Partnership and Communication Lead at CAM said:**

“To further embed our strategic partnership, Electricity North West made an **innovation seed fund** available to us during 2021/22, to enable support services to be designed in such a way that they minimise risk. They **shared knowledge** about their digital agent and this was a catalyst in our decision to replicate the approach, leading to the launch of our first ever digital ‘advice bot’ (pictured below) in January 2022.”



**Customer Feedback Panel** and to expand inclusion, we rebranded from chatbot to ‘digital agent’ and broadened the information available to ensure equity with other communication channels. During 2021/22 7,480 customers resolved their enquiry via the digital agent.

**Stakeholder outcomes**

- ✓ Silktime identifies our website as industry leading (an overall accessibility score of 80.6 out of 100 compared to 54.0 among all other DNO groups), meaning it meets the accessibility needs of our customers and minimises exclusion.
- ✓ Our digital agent enables users to adopt their preferred method of communication, and with 92% satisfied overall, users switching to other methods is kept to a minimum.
- ✓ Wider replication of our approach by CAM has expanded the reach of digital support to 1,284 North West customers.

**Over 5 years, optimising self-serve channels will create £7.44 social value in excess of every £1 spent**

**On-the-ground energy champions break down barriers**

**What we heard**

Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel members advised that to tackle the underlying causes, our efforts to tackle the digital divide must align with and reinforce wider work to improve households’ financial resilience. They also highlighted how food and fuel poverty intersect and that we should bring our partners together to trial innovative engagement methods with key groups that we can learn from and replicate.

**What we did**

Our investment with Citizens Advice Manchester (CAM), enabled the recruitment, training and deployment of two new on-the-ground energy efficiency champions and five energy advisors to process their referrals. To mitigate restrictions on indoor engagement with **hard-to-reach** groups (e.g. through Job Centres) we introduced CAM to our partner, The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT). Their 400 volunteers deliver weekly food clubs in 60 locations that enable people on low incomes to obtain healthy groceries valued at £23 for just £7 and reduce reliance on food banks. Champions trialled and iteratively refined a COVID-19 secure ‘queue busting’ engagement technique at events, using idle time to

provide energy and income maximisation advice. Through repeatedly observing friendly champions providing support to interested people, wider members became increasingly curious and receptive to conversations that they had previously declined. Champions also saw a higher take-up of support offers when their messaging enabled fuel-poor customers to feel part of a ‘majority’ of people wanting to spend less on their energy bills. **We replicated this approach** across 60 locations (e.g. supermarkets and vaccine clinics) and 69 events.

**Jessica Mellor, Energy Efficiency Champion, CAM, said:**

“At a TBBT food club Sarah\* explained that with energy prices increasing so much she had disconnected her supply, and that as a single mother she didn’t know who to turn to for help. Without the technology or computer skills to apply herself, I secured £100 from our crisis fund towards the cost of heat and food and referred her for a £150 Council Tax Rebate. We discussed strategies to reduce her future energy bills and she felt a sense of hope.”

\*name changed for confidentiality reasons

**Stakeholder outcomes**

- ✓ Expanding ‘boots on the ground’ enabled trust to be built with 1,477 fuel-poor consumers during a six month period.
- ✓ It is an inclusive approach that mitigates a lack of awareness, access, self-confidence and emotional barriers preventing digitally excluded consumers accessing financial and energy efficiency support.

**Over 5 years, event-based referrals will create £37.97 social value in excess of every £1 spent.**

**What we will do next**

CAM will draw on our annual innovation seed fund to trial re-engaging with customers (using SMS among other techniques), seven days after champion interventions. This will enable us to measure the effectiveness of the advice given ‘in-the-moment’ and an opportunity to deepen support where needed.

**Increasing our understanding of fuel poverty mindsets**

ENHANCED HARD-TO-REACH INNOVATIVE

**What we heard**

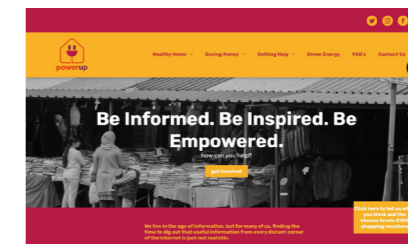
Housing provider One Manchester facilitated the second year of our longitudinal ‘fuel poverty mindsets’ research study in three diverse Greater Manchester communities. To encourage the take-up of support offers consumers told us to: make it local, don’t focus on energy, empower people to help themselves, focus on the home as it is the centre of people’s world and keep everything simple. Furthermore, they advised against us ‘targeting’ them via messaging and suggested achieving this by design.

**What we did**

As part of the second phase of the project, a strategic workshop was held with a place-based forum of 15 active and local community groups. Based on the consumer research, the forum decided to change the original target driven campaign aimed at those in (or in danger of) fuel poverty, to a broader and more inclusive approach.

A creative workshop aided concept development of a ‘powerup’ campaign, designed to resonate with those that need help, without them feeling targeted. It delivered a range of wellness themed resources (e.g. healthy home, saving money, green energy, getting help) via a **bespoke website**, social media campaign and events hosted by community groups that local people already go to.

Powerup logos were personalised for local areas and included in literature distributed via pharmacists, GP health centres, local shops, faith centres, community hubs, libraries, pubs and community champions. In total the campaign reached over 5,550 residents.



**\*Nadira (a customer) said:**

“To be honest, before speaking to ‘powerup’ at our mosque, I didn’t believe I would be eligible for any support, so I was very emotional when I received a grant for a new washing machine and a winter welfare payment. I am not confident speaking English, but my kids do, so my eldest has used the ‘powerup’ videos to work out how to control the hot water temperature on our boiler. He says we have saved £40 so far.”

\*name changed for confidentiality reasons

**Stakeholder outcomes**

- ✓ Our research has helped us to better understand the triggers, motivators and enablers to fuel-poor customers taking up support offers, such as maximising the benefits that they are entitled to.
- ✓ In ‘powerup’ evaluation surveys, 87% of campaign recipients understood the support available, 75% felt more in control of energy bills and 70% intended to take up at least one support offer.
- ✓ One Manchester will expand ‘powerup’ into other areas, to ensure a lasting positive legacy.

**Over 5 years, ‘powerup’ support referrals will create £13.73 social value in excess of every £1 spent.**

**What we will do next**

**Maxine Stiller, Research and Insights Manager, said:** “We **shared learning** with our Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel. In response to members’ feedback we will replicate ‘powerup’ in rural areas and ensure that there is representation of people with neurological conditions, so that we understand how this impacts on the ability of people to make behavioural changes.”

**Collaboration with partners creates a flourishing referral network**

EMBEDDED HARD-TO-REACH INNOVATIVE

**What we heard**

In Part One (page five) of our submission we shared that in our 2021/22 **planning for the future** engagement over 18,000 stakeholders wanted to see a step-change in ambition from us to support all 250,000 fuel-poor customers in our region by 2028. In tandem with an escalating cost of living crisis, our fuel poverty mindsets research highlighted that consumers in crisis need immediate referral support to improve their situation, rather than incremental change to help them save money. Our partner Groundwork also highlighted a trend towards multiple contact and advocacy being required due to more complex issues. Our Customer Director engaged our network of referral partners who affirmed that with our ongoing commitment, they had the capacity required to scale-up much needed support now, and make our future plans a reality sooner.

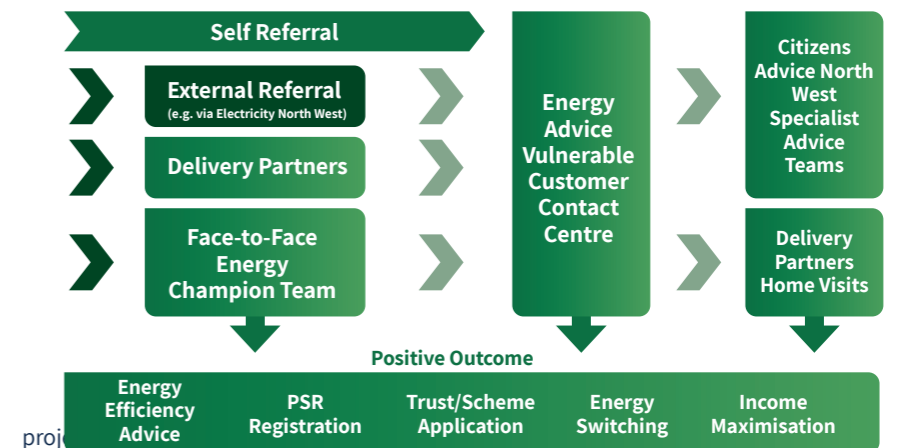
**What we did**

We worked closely with partners to expand the breadth of referral pathways available. As well as being able to refer themselves, 200 consumers were signposted to CAM by our colleagues and 1,447 by our delivery partners,

using a secure digital system ‘ReferNet’. Our funding enabled the recruitment of six expert energy champions and expansion of face-to-face activity from Manchester into Cumbria, including drop-ins at 15 local Citizens Advice offices. Support was expanded through bringing underutilised capacity in other Citizens Advice contact centres online and launching a 24/7 advice bot. More widely, CAM rolled-out an ‘Advice on Prescription’

them to prescribe their patients a specialist advice session if they believe that a wider non-health issue might be causing, aggravating or sustaining their patients’ health problem. Coordinated with local Clinical Commissioning Groups, GP surgeries have mobile handsets which enabled 150 patients per month, per surgery, to call discreetly and enter the referral system.

**Fuel-poor customer referral pathways**



Collaboration with partners creates a flourishing referral network - Continued

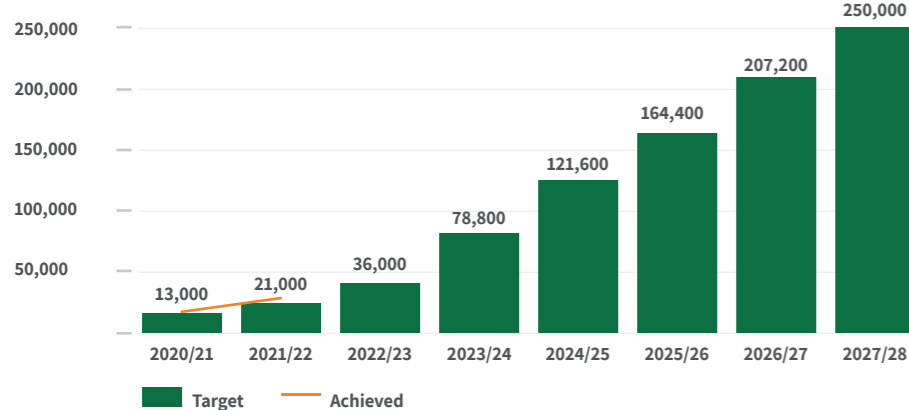
In parallel, we worked with Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAFS) to expand their Cold to Cosy Homes service into West Cumbria with new partnerships in Copeland and Barrow boroughs and funded targeted support by Groundwork to housing provider welfare teams seeking energy advice on behalf of socially isolated occupiers.

Partner	Investment	Project outcomes																																										
Manchester	£250,000	This year 11,163 fuel-poor customers were supported by our partners with 36,487 referrals, an average of 3.3 referral outcomes per individual, up from 2.07 in 2020/21. <b>Provision of advice:</b>																																										
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Areas reached: All 10 priority areas (see page five)

This year Ofgem announced an increase of £693 in the energy price cap from April 2022. Furthermore, Citizens Advice predicted £145-a-month hikes to energy costs in October 2022, leaving up to one in four adults unable to afford their bill. In response we commissioned a 45-minute online energy saving seminar which provided customers with practical changes to save money and help the environment. SMS invitations targeted event registration in our top 10 priority areas (see page five). Over 600 people registered for the event, hosted by the Energy Savings Trust and co-delivered by our partners CAM, CAFS, CHIL and Groundwork. Following positive customer feedback we will replicate this approach in 2022/23 with a series of energy saving seminars.

On a trajectory to support 250,000 (100%) fuel-poor customers



Kirsten Rushton, Customer Welfare Advisor, said:



“An engineer used the PSR app to signpost a customer to me whose boiler had stopped working following a power cut. A mother with two young children, subject to a safeguarding order, was very distressed at the thought of them being taken from her if she could not provide a warm home. She had neither the funds or insurance to call out an engineer, so I arranged for Cosy Homes to visit and guide her through a grant funding application to replace the unrepairable boiler and, because of the urgency, pre-approved immediate installation. With the heating back on, our partner spent time with the customer discussing energy saving advice.”

Stakeholder outcomes

- ✓ 24,223 fuel-poor customers have been reached since 2017. This represents 10% of all eligible individuals, exceeds our annual target and puts us on a trajectory to reach 100% by 2028.
- ✓ In 2021/22, our referral network generated £4.6m social value (net present value), up from £1.88m year-on-year.
- ✓ 81% of fuel-poor customers surveyed post-intervention, reported improved mental wellbeing and 45% felt their physical health had improved after receiving advice.

Over 5 years expanding our referral network will create £27.71 social value in excess of every £1 spent, an increase of £18 year-on-year, demonstrating the extra value created from our holistic and scalable approach.



What we will do next



Hayley Hughes, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, CAM, said: “We have been invited by Electricity North West to co-locate in their contact centre, to further integrate our energy advice operations. After the recent energy saving seminar, a joint event on ‘not leaving anyone behind in the energy transition’ will follow.”

The leading DNO



2021/22 – Awards and Recognition

The Institute of Customer Service  
‘Best Use of Customer Insight Award’ (2021)



The Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter  
‘Best in Supporting Mental Wellbeing Award’ (2022)



The North West the National Apprenticeship  
‘Recruitment Excellence Award’ (2021)



The Carbon Literacy Project  
‘Silver Accreditation’ (2022)



