



ANNEX 9: VULNERABLE CUSTOMER STRATEGY

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1.Introduction

We are committed to supporting our customers in all situations where they may be vulnerable. To do this we need to understand who and where they are, and to know the most appropriate way to anticipate and meet their needs. Our aims are to ensure that our services are available and made accessible to all customers equally, regardless of their personal circumstances, and to embed these values throughout all aspects of our business.

This Annex describes our approach to developing our services for Vulnerable Customers, and in particular those who are included on our Priority Services Register (PSR) or may be described as Fuel Poor. Our strategy, which will continue through RII0-ED1, is to establish a network of contacts with other organisations and agencies that have similar interests to ourselves as service providers, or have areas of expertise that we can use to improve our understanding of vulnerable customers and their needs. We will continue to develop our services based on this collaborative approach.

We have developed a series of specific proposals, which sit within four broad categories:

- To **promote the Priority Services Register** effectively, to ensure that it is used by all those who can benefit from it.
- To establish an effective **contact strategy** with vulnerable customers, to ensure that the data we hold is regularly refreshed.
- To establish a comprehensive **data strategy** for vulnerable customers, within the wider strategy for Customer Relationship Management.
- To **improve the services** we provide for vulnerable and fuel-poor customers.

Many of the proposals do not require the provision of additional resources; however we recognise that organisational changes, both structural and cultural, will be necessary to drive our strategic commitment to vulnerable customers. We have also identified a number of activities and proposals which do have cost implications; however we are not seeking any additional funding for our activities in this area. We believe that our developments across a broad range of customer service measures, including relevant stakeholder engagement, will drive sufficient incentive reward from the Broad Measure of Customer Service and the Interruptions Incentive Scheme to support these measures without a specific funding request.

The initiatives requiring investment are as follows:

- IT systems for Customer Relationship Management.
- Resilience improvements of networks supplying regional hospitals.
- Resilience improvements of networks supplying a high density of vulnerable customers.
- Welfare provisions for vulnerable customers.

The first two of these initiatives are planned to be started during DPCR5, incurring a cost to shareholders of £2 million and £0.6 million respectively.

2. Vulnerable Customers

2.1 Adoption of the British Standard

The relevant British Standard is BS 18477 “Inclusive service provision - Requirements for identifying and responding to consumer vulnerability”. The standard is designed specifically to help organisations to identify consumers who could be vulnerable or disadvantaged and to adapt their service to be inclusive and accessible to all. The standard uses the term “consumers” to be applicable across a broad spectrum of organisations. We propose to adopt this British Standard in order to provide us with the necessary level of consistency and guidelines to work from on behalf of our customers. This will ensure we consider our approach for all our customers who are faced with complex or urgent issues arising from a wide range of individual circumstances.

The standard defines vulnerability as:

“The condition in which a consumer is at greater risk of mis-selling, exploitation or being put at a disadvantage in terms of accessing or using a service, or in seeking redress.”

The standard encourages companies to identify and respond to consumer vulnerability and tackle issues such as providing responsible business practices and accessible systems. The standard:

- Sets out recommendations for identifying risk factors, such as ‘triggers’, and how to understand consumers’ circumstances quickly as well as the appropriate approach needed;
- Pulls together best practice in terms of how services are marketed, sold and presented (including billing) and the information requirements that different audiences or groups may be looking for; and
- Provides case studies and statistics that will hopefully highlight where bad practice has resulted in a negative result for both business and consumer.

The adoption of the BS18477 will help us to:

- Understand and adopt best practice in the identification and treatment of vulnerable consumers;
- Understand what our customers have a right to expect from us;
- Adopt fair, ethical and inclusive practices; and
- Increase the confidence that our customers have in Electricity North West.

By adopting the British Standard for vulnerable customers, all customers are covered by our promise to challenge our processes and behaviours to ensure that none of our customers are hindered in gaining access to our services or in seeking redress if things go wrong. This area is evolving and requires our continual focus and drive throughout RIIO-ED1. To ensure this focus we will establish a team to lead the business changes in these areas and engage with all relevant stakeholders.

We will develop our strategies for vulnerable customers to be consistent with Ofgem’s developing Consumer Vulnerability Strategy. We will work with Ofgem and others to review our Priority Services Register and in the development of best practice in this area.

2.2 Priority Services Register

We are aware that many of our customers have special needs or requirements, particularly when the power goes off. We maintain a Priority Services Register (PSR) of vulnerable customers and have teamed up with other partners such as the British Red Cross to offer enhanced services to these customers when they are without power.

We currently have in the region of 235,650 households on our PSR, categorised in line with the Ofgem guidelines. The Licence requirements relating to the PSR are set out in Appendix 1. Our adoption of BS18477 will mean that both the quantity and the quality of the data held on the register will have to be enhanced.

Priority services customers currently receive additional contact from our contact centre during power cuts or planned interruptions to keep them informed of the situation and likely time before power restoration, or to make arrangements for the British Red Cross to visit them. The information we currently provide on our website is in Appendix 2. In summary we will:

- Arrange for a telephone call to provide reassurance and advice regarding outages;
- Provide vital resources, including blankets, gloves and thermal mugs during outages;
- Arrange for a volunteer to visit with a hot drink;
- Arrange for trained volunteers to visit areas to provide extra support on a larger scale;
- Deploy a mobile unit during incidents; and
- Offer a password scheme for extra security and peace of mind.

We recognise that we need to do more for these customers and the following sections set out the key issues, the process and the plans for developing this aspect of our customer service.

3. Process and Key Issues

We aim to develop a flexible and inclusive service offering for all our customers, in particular ensuring that services are accessible to vulnerable consumers, giving them confidence that their needs can be met.

Our work to date has identified four key areas of focus in order to improve our services to meet the needs of vulnerable customers:

- To **promote the Priority Services Register** effectively, to ensure that it is used by all those who can benefit from it.
- To establish an effective **contact strategy** with vulnerable customers, to ensure that the data we hold is regularly refreshed.
- To establish a comprehensive **data strategy** for vulnerable customers, within the wider strategy for Customer Relationship Management.
- To **improve the services** we provide for vulnerable and fuel-poor customers.

Our communication strategies in relation to vulnerable customers, both for promoting the service and for ongoing contact, are at the heart of the ongoing process for continual development of our plans throughout RIIO-ED1 and beyond. Our core strategy is to gain insight into the needs of groups of vulnerable customers by consulting with key agencies, and then to collaborate with them to deliver appropriate services. We fully understand that this approach cannot be used to override the needs of individual customers; however we

believe that the pooling of information and expertise is key to developing a properly considered action plan.

We envisage that the enhancement of data will best be achieved by establishing a network of links with other organisations and targeting specific areas of customer data. For example, we are seeking to refresh our priority services data through relationships established with organisations having allied interests such as other network operators, councils and charities. This would be supplemented by the development of scripts for use by the contact centre to obtain relevant data directly from customers. This engagement is targeted to deliver the following:

- Provide the means for promoting the PSR to all our customers;
- Facilitate the regular refresh of the PSR data;
- Improve the data quality of our PSR;
- Enhance the services we provide to customers on our PSR; and
- Develop initiatives with agencies concerned with vulnerable customers to provide mutual support (eg to provide on-site support following loss of supply).

4. Promoting Our Services for Vulnerable Customers

We recognise that the data that we hold on vulnerable customers is in need of improvement in terms of both quantity (ie coverage of all customers who would benefit) and also quality (ie identifying the specific needs of individual customers).

We plan to address this issue by being more proactive in publicising the Priority Services Register, and in obtaining data from a number of sources. We have trained our customer-facing people to recognise potential PSR customers and, where this is the case, provide a proactive registration service. We will ensure that all our front-line people including our contractors are regularly trained in these aspects on an ongoing basis. We will ensure that our PSR customers are contacted a minimum of once every other year so that the information we hold is up to date.

In addition to publicising the PSR on our website, we have developed a contact strategy based on establishing a network of links with suppliers, other network companies, local stakeholders and agencies working with vulnerable consumers. Our strategy and services will be further enhanced through our contact with relevant stakeholders. We have contacted a wide range of stakeholders who work with customers of different stages of vulnerability, for example:

British Red Cross

We partner with the British Red Cross in order to provide customers with practical and personal support particularly if they are without power. The partnership provides us with invaluable insights into the needs of customers in this situation.

National Health Service

Knowing that health services are in contact with people at times of vulnerability, we have contacted the newly created Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in order to inform them of the services we offer customers. We aim to develop this relationship by inviting them to our external stakeholder panel to discuss our vulnerable customer strategy and developments going forward.

National Energy Action (NEA)

We are part of NEA's Business Support Group and have worked with them on various projects including the evaluation of our educational schemes to include fuel efficiency messages, and on a scheme in Stockport with the dual aim of lowering network load whilst helping to alleviate fuel poverty in the area. We also have an NEA representative on our External Stakeholder Panel to help guide and shape our policies with regards to vulnerable customers.

We plan to establish a working group with external agencies that will meet twice a year to review service delivery performance and examine opportunities to enhance it, utilising the feedback from our stakeholder engagement. We believe that by facilitating this working together in support partnerships we will improve knowledge on such customers and find shared innovative solutions. The strategy will drive a shared list of vulnerable customers and locations in the North West of England.

We are committed to working with all stakeholders on sharing information within the requirements of the Data Protection Act in order to improve the delivery of necessary assistance to customers.

5. Ongoing Contact with Vulnerable Customers

The circumstances of vulnerable customers can change, and it is important that we regularly refresh our data to maintain its value. We will regularly update data from the network of links established in our strategy for promoting the PSR, and also make regular contact with the PSR customers themselves.

We plan to contact all customers on the register once every other year to update details and confirm they understand how we can help. Our initiatives on customer relationship management will help us collect and respond to these differing priority customer needs.

More fundamentally, our systems and processes for managing customer interactions will have policies for identifying and handling consumer vulnerability embedded within them. We recognise that in order to respond to this challenge there will need to be a culture shift across the organisation. We are developing a programme in conjunction with the Mary Gobar organisation that will deliver a culture of ownership and impact for 1,600 Electricity North West employees and our 400 strong contracting partners. The training will allow employees to focus on their areas of impact to improve customer service by taking ownership and removing blocks. The long term delivery programme is supported by an embedding programme that will be built into Electricity North West staff appraisal documents to challenge behaviours.

Our contact centre people will be trained to identify triggers for vulnerability and how to tailor appropriate products and services when any customer contacts us, for whatever reason. Other aspects of the programme will be rolled out to the whole workforce including our contractors, to ensure that the customer service objectives are tied in for all our people.

6. Customer Relationship Management and Data Strategy

6.1 Customer Relationship Management

We want to understand and perform for our customers with the same efficiency and effectiveness that we apply to looking after our network assets. This means making the most of the information currently available to us and looking forward to how that will be enhanced by future developments, both in our company and across the industry as a whole.

The introduction of Smart Meters, which will be rolled out from the beginning of 2015, will help us bridge a major gap in our customer information. In the longer term (towards the end of RIIO-ED1 and throughout RIIO-ED2) we see significant potential to improve customer service through enhancing:

- Customer communication and interaction;
- Network performance monitoring;
- Management of power outages;
- Provision of connections;
- Demand Side Response; and
- Management of losses.

Smart Meter data on its own, however, is only part of the answer. It will certainly help us understand our customers' interactions with the network better but we need to do more to understand their wider relationships with our business as a whole.

We recognise that Customer Relationship Management extends beyond the systems for holding data itself to how we obtain the data and how we use it. We anticipate that our relationship with our customers will develop over time and that in the future there will be greater need for:

- Anticipating customer needs and desires;
- Segmentation of the customer base, using multiple factors, leading to more personalised services;
- Proactive initiation of services using intelligent software; and
- Empowered employees who can resolve issues quickly, supported by well-informed management.

We believe that customer satisfaction scores will be seen as a key indicator of confidence in our business, and this will become increasingly important because trust will be a major factor in persuading customers to share information and collaborate in new service applications.

We expect that:

- Customers will increasingly expect offerings to be bespoke, personalised, or have the appearance of being tailored to their needs;
- Customer preferences and tastes will change more quickly; and
- Empowered customers will be increasingly confident in sharing their details in return for personalised and value-add services, but only on their terms and with organisations they trust.

Our vision is to hold all our customer data in one location, allowing us to offer a better more personalised service to our customers and creating a trusting relationship. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) will help us understand our customers' situations and

experiences with Electricity North West by holding all the data in one location, which will benefit the customer in their interactions with us.

Our strategy is to use the example of vulnerable customers to drive the development of CRM for all our customers. We believe that if our CRM systems and processes are designed with the vulnerable customer in mind, then they will be fit for purpose in addressing the needs of the wider customer base.

For example, we have identified the need to be able to search for data by location and also by customer as we are not generally notified if a customer moves property. We also need the flexibility to record transient cases of vulnerability and report areas where there is high density of fuel poor. In the case of vulnerable customers it is essential to their quality of life that we record everything we learn about them and utilise this for future dealings with them.

6.2 Data Strategy

Although we hold a considerable amount of data regarding our network assets and connection points, our information about individual customers, their contact history and their requirements, is not currently sufficiently well embedded within the overall framework of data that we hold. Our strategy for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is described further in Annex 18 IT Strategy.

We are currently developing the processes around which to build a Customer Relationship Management system. At a high level we see this as a means of providing better linkages between data that we already hold (suitably extended to pick up new developments), and new or refreshed data relating to individual customers. We recognise that in the future there will be both the need and the opportunity to hold significantly more data about our customers and their needs.

At an early stage of this project, plans are in place for improving the ease of access to data relating to the network usage of all our half hourly metered customers and linking it to network data, primarily as a network planning and reporting tool.

The next stage is the development of query and analysis tools designed to work with all the elements of data described below. An example of the benefits of this approach is our work to identify networks and substations providing supplies to high density vulnerable customer locations, in order to prioritise investment in resilience measures. Our aim is to make this form of analysis much easier to perform in the future.

The relevant data falls into four broad categories and could be held in different systems:

- Data relating to the connection point
 - Metering point Administration Number (MPAN)
 - Capacity
 - Low Carbon Technologies connected (Generation, Electric Vehicle charging point, Heat Pump etc)
- Charging/billing data
 - Consumption data
 - Data from Smart Meters
- Network and locational data
 - Geographic
 - Network connectivity
- Individual customer data
 - Contact information
 - Contact history

- Vulnerable Customer details

Our plan is to complete the creation of the customer data repository in DPCR5.

7. Proposed Additional Services for Vulnerable Customers

We aim to develop a flexible and inclusive service offering for all our customers. Ofgem is rightly concerned that we do not assume responsibility for solving issues that extend beyond the scope of our business. However, maintaining and restoring supplies to our most vulnerable customers is our core business and we believe that our commitments to provide enhanced services in the future are a clear demonstration that we are serious in meeting the challenge.

We have proposals in the following areas:

- Network investment proposals for improving supplies to vulnerable customers
 - Improving the resilience of those networks and substations providing supplies to hospitals
 - Improving the resilience of those networks and substations providing supplies to high density vulnerable customer locations
- Welfare Services
- Automatic Payment of Guaranteed Standard Payments
- Fuel Poor and Off-Grid customers

7.1 Network investment proposals for improving supplies to vulnerable customers

We recognise that some of our customers are particularly vulnerable to loss of their electricity supply. For such customers, electricity may be required to power life-supporting equipment such as ventilators, oxygen concentrators, dialysis machines and other similar devices.

In addition to the existing priority services that we offer we are planning to invest in network infrastructure to ensure that any distribution transformers which provide supply to high numbers of vulnerable customers are resilient to HV fault events. In such cases it is expected that the supplies would be restored via an alternative supply, using network automation, thus significantly reducing the duration of power outage.

We have two specific initiatives for network investment on behalf of vulnerable customers:

7.1.1 Improving the resilience of those networks and substations providing supplies to hospitals

We have completed work to identify all hospitals connected to the high voltage network in our area. This has identified some 56 sites and it is proposed to invest in the network such that supplies can be restored to these locations by means of network automation in the event of a fault outage affecting the normal supply route. This investment will result in a significant improvement in the resilience of the network in these locations.

This investment is expected to cost £1.2 million. We intend to start this work in the current price control period and plan to address 50% of all sites by 2015 at a cost of £600,000. A

further £600,000 will be invested during the early part of the RIIO-ED1 period. All work will be completed by 2017.

7.1.2 Improving the resilience of those networks and substations providing supplies to high density vulnerable customer locations

There are around 235,650 PSR customers connected to our network. These customers are supplied from a total of 13,360 individual distribution substations. Of these, 2,790 substations (supplying electricity to 69,500 vulnerable customers) will have remote control installed as part of ongoing quality of supply investments.

Of the remaining substations, it is our intention to fit remote control and commission network automation at all substations which meet qualifying criteria which combine the total number of vulnerable customers connected and the fault performance history for that substation.

Qualifying substations for this investment are those supplying 50 or more vulnerable customers which, when measured over the previous five year period, have seen two or more interruptions as a result of a higher voltage fault. The investment is intended to ensure that supplies can be restored from an alternative HV source in the event of a fault outage. The network restoration switching will be via automation systems thus significantly reducing the duration of any supply outage.

In total there are 87 distribution substations that satisfy the above criteria supplying electricity to just over 5,200 vulnerable customers. This investment is expected to cost £1.6 million. We intend to start this work at the start of the RIIO-ED1 period and it will take two years to complete.

7.1.3 Network investment proposals summary

In total we plan to invest £2.8 million in improving the network performance to vulnerable customers. This investment is based on well established methods and will result in significant improvement in the quality of supply for the most vulnerable of our customers.

The investment is summarised in the following table:

Initiative	Number of sites	Cost	Number of customers benefiting	Anticipated completion date
Hospitals	56	£1.2m	Not applicable	All work completed by 2017
Domestic vulnerable customers	87	£1.6m	5,262	

We are planning to commence this work in 2014 and complete up to half of it in DPCR5. As a consequence, we have included £1.4m to complete the programme in our RIIO-ED1 submission.

7.2 Welfare Services

We propose to offer other services to vulnerable customers to minimise the impact of supply interruptions on their lives through improved planning, coordination and communication

regarding planned work, and more proactive communication and support during unplanned outages:

- We will provide an alternative supply for customers for planned interruptions or under fault scenarios over three hours where we cannot provide a reasonable time for restoration of the supply and where there is a defined medical dependency on electricity eg:
 - Nebuliser
 - Heart / lung machine
 - Kidney Dialysis
 - Oxygen Concentrator
 - Ventilator
 - Other medical dependency on electricity
 - Stair lifts
 - Restricted movement
- We will provide welfare and food provision for PSR customers off supply following a six hour period
- All connections applications for PSR customers will include a site visit if required by the customer to assist in the overall process
- All PSR Customers will receive 14 days notice of Planned Interruptions through face to face contact
- Prior to any planned interruption, the volume of PSR customers will be assessed to determine whether alternative facilities would be required. We will make proactive contact with all PSR customers affected by a fault within half an hour to understand the level of support required
- We will offer proactive contacts to all customers as reminders for planned interruptions, and providing supporting helpful tips on how to manage through a power cut
- We will develop information packs for dealing without electricity, with tutorials to be made available through our stakeholders such as:
 - Housing Associations
 - Schools
 - Youth Workers
- We will ensure our communications are available through all media channels in accessible formats
- We will make it easy to do business with us, by being transparent and not using jargon
- We will send a welcome letter and information pack to every new customer joining the Priority Service Register

7.3 Automatic Payment of Guaranteed Standard Payments

Guaranteed Standards are standards of customer service backed by a guarantee - customers receive a payment, either directly from us or through their electricity supplier, if we fail to meet these standards. The standards are the same for all distributors.

Guaranteed Standard payments are there to ensure that where our performance falls below the minimum level expected, the customer is given an appropriate level of payment.

For some failures, customers are required to claim a payment though it is recognised that many customers will not be aware of the existence of the standards and whether a payment is due in particular circumstances. In RIIO-ED1, we will make payments to customers on the Priority Service Register automatically. In addition, we have addressed the issue of automatic payments as part of our stakeholder engagement process and as a result we propose to inform our customers better of their eligibility for payment as well as raising

awareness of the guaranteed standards more generally. The increased proactive contact will provide us with further opportunity for maintaining our vulnerable customer data.

7.4 Fuel Poor and Off-Grid customers

Our fuel poverty strategy is built around providing information and advice to customers about the services and options available to them. We are aware that suppliers have a range of initiatives available, such those provided under the Energy Companies Obligation scheme. Although we have no similar scheme available to draw on, we recognise that we are in a position to develop a key role in interacting with customers through the information we have access to and have scope to form partnerships with others to address fuel poverty issues.

We are proposing the following steps:

- Analyse the data available for us to identify areas in which customers are likely to be classified as fuel poor
- Analyse any crossover between this data and our Priority Services Register
- Introduce the following information initiatives:
 - Offer information on our website to offer advice to customers on ways to reduce electricity consumption.
 - Train our contact centre people to provide support and information over the phone
 - Develop and offer information packs on how to be energy efficient
- Consider opportunities to introduce energy efficiency measures in areas where there is high density of fuel poor and where the Electricity North West network is congested to free up capacity and reduce reinforcement costs

In respect of the last of these initiatives, we commissioned National Energy Action (NEA) and Sustainability First to evaluate the potential for electrical load reduction measures to be implemented in an area of Stockport served by the Vernon Park primary substation, to help the fuel poor served by the substation and mitigate the need for network reinforcement.

NEA has produced a high-level assessment of the possible costs and likely effectiveness of a range of measures and interventions that could support reduced peak electricity of up to 2MW for the Vernon Park substation. NEA has also considered how these measures might contribute to the alleviation of fuel poverty. The next stage is to consider the business case for the identified options, on the basis of estimated capital costs, effectiveness in delivering social benefit, timescale and confidence level for the achievement of the anticipated load reduction.

The options under consideration include technological initiatives and also the less certain but more sustainably significant savings achieved by influencing people's behaviour to do such things as not using high load equipment such as washing machines at times of peak load. Amongst these we are developing initiatives to deliver practical lessons in energy use and consumption to the children of the North West.

We will engage with local authorities, agencies and suppliers to assist fuel poor customers by understanding their energy usage and increasing their awareness of energy efficiency options and possible alternative forms of energy. We will use partnerships to build a network of links to websites and reference information, and also provide the ability to refer customers to appropriate organisations that can help.

In particular, we will look at how we can work with Gas Distributors and others to consider solutions such as renewable heat technologies, alongside connections to the gas grid, as

cost effective ways of helping fuel poor consumers who are currently off the gas network. We also see the developments in 'connect and manage' and the socialisation of domestic reinforcement costs to be helpful where low carbon technologies could be installed as the most cost effective solution

Our training packages for our contact centre people will specifically address the identification and handling of fuel poor customers.

8.Costs

Whilst most of the requirements of the Vulnerable Customer Strategy would not require specific funding, we have identified some areas which will incur costs. The IT and network investments have been included in our submission (see below); however we will not be seeking direct funding for the other initiatives. We believe that our developments across a broad range of customer service measures, including relevant stakeholder engagement, will drive sufficient incentive reward from the Broad Measure of Customer Service and the Interruptions Incentive Scheme to support these measures without a specific funding request.

Ofgem is increasing the stakeholder engagement element of the Broad Measure of Customer Service to around £1.8 million to incentivise DNOs in this area. The reward provided will be based on an assessment of the DNOs' use of data and customer insight to identify solutions for vulnerable customers, as well as their ability to integrate this into core business activities. The success criteria are not yet clear, nor is the split between general stakeholder engagement and vulnerable customer strategy though Ofgem have said they will use a balanced scorecard approach to inform the allocation of the reward, which they hope to develop before the start of the RIIO-ED1 period.

Initiatives with costs included in the submission are shown below.

(£m)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	RIIO-ED1
Resilience improvements of networks supplying Regional Hospitals	0.6								0.6
Resilience improvements of networks supplying a high density of vulnerable customers	0.4	0.4							0.8
IT systems for Customer Relationship Management	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	2.0

Appendix 1 - DNO Licence Requirements for PSR

PSR Definition

PSR Customers are Domestic Customers who:

- (a) are of Pensionable Age, disabled, or chronically sick; and
- (b) because they have special communication needs or are dependent on electricity for medical reasons, require certain information and advice about interruptions in the supply of electricity to their premises; and
- (c) have either:
 - (i) personally asked the licensee to add their name to the Priority Services Register, or
 - (ii) had a person acting on their behalf ask for their name to be added to it, or
 - (iii) had a Relevant Supplier ask for their name to be added to it.

PSR Obligations

10.4 The licensee must:

- (a) when a PSR Customer's name is first added to the Priority Services Register, give that customer appropriate information and advice about what precautions to take and what to do in the event of interruptions in the supply of electricity to the customer's premises;
- (b) when it needs to make a planned interruption in the supply of electricity to a PSR Customer's premises, give that customer such prior advice and information as may be appropriate in relation to that event; and
- (c) ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that during any unplanned interruption of supply to their premises, PSR Customers are promptly notified and kept informed:
 - (i) of the time at which the supply is likely to be restored, and
 - (ii) of any help that may be able to be provided.

10.7 If a Domestic Customer who is of Pensionable Age, disabled, or chronically sick asks it to do so, the licensee must agree a password, free of charge, with that customer that can be used by any Representative of the licensee to enable the customer to identify that person.

10.8 The licensee must provide facilities, free of charge, which enable any Domestic Customer who is:

- (a) blind or partially sighted; or
- (b) deaf or hearing-impaired and in possession of appropriate equipment, to ask or complain about any service provided by the licensee.

10.12 Nothing in this condition prevents the licensee from:

- (a) including Domestic Customers additional to those specified at paragraph 10.3 in its Priority Services Register; or
- (b) providing services to Domestic Customers that exceed those required under this condition.

Appendix 2 – Electricity North West website advice

Priority Services Customers

If you register as a priority services customer, we will inform you in advance of any planned interruptions and contact you proactively when we have an unplanned interruption.

Do you represent a residential care home or a similar organisation? If so please register as a priority service customer, we are here to help. We recognise that there are many customers who do not fall into the above category but still need our assistance during supply interruptions depending on their particular circumstances.

We have a strong partnership in place with the British Red Cross who can help with welfare service provision including hot drinks or just a friendly voice on the phone.

Our **PSR Application Form** includes the following options:

- I am registered disabled
- I have a disabled child
- I am visual or hearing impaired
- I am seriously ill
- I have mobility problems
- I am over 65
- Other (please specify)
- Do you or anyone in your household rely on medical equipment that is powered by electricity? (If yes, please specify the type of equipment)
- Are you the customer impacted? (If no, I am doing this on behalf of the above and have their permission to give out their details)

British Red Cross Partnership

Vulnerable residents in the North West can benefit from a targeted support campaign, thanks to Electricity North West's partnership with the British Red Cross.

We partner with the British Red Cross in order to provide customers with invaluable practical and personal support if they lose their power unexpectedly.

We operate at 99.99 percent reliability but unfortunately power cuts do happen due to external and environmental events such as metal theft, falling tree branches and bad weather. The partnership with the British Red Cross helps support those who need it, on the rare occasion when they are without power.

The campaign is tailored to the individual customer's needs – from a reassuring voice at the other end of the phone to house visits delivering a hot drink. We also provide a vital 'Customer Emergency Pack' which includes a wind-up torch, fleece gloves and a blanket to help people keep warm.

Customers eligible for the free service, which will be available continually throughout the year, are those who may find it particularly difficult to be without electricity, such as older or disabled people, or those with a medical dependency on electricity. People can sign up to Electricity North West's Priority Services Register via this link or by calling 0800 195 4141.

Letting Callers into your Home

There may be the odd occasion when a member of Electricity North West or one of our contractors will have to enter your premises. Before letting anyone into your home please be aware that:

- all Electricity North West staff and our appointed contractors have identity cards showing the employees name, identity number, colour photograph and a contact number for confirmation.
- the majority of Electricity North West staff and our contractors will have fully liveried vehicles.
- all of our staff and contract staff should have clothing showing they are from Electricity North West or the company they represent.
- Electricity North West and appointed contractors do not “cold call” so unless we have made an appointment, or you are without electricity, it is unlikely that anybody representing us will call at your home without making advance arrangements.
- If you are in any doubt do not let any suspicious callers in. Check the validity of any callers claiming to be from Electricity North West or one of our contracts by calling us on 0800 195 4141.

Password Scheme

If you live alone and have any concerns about letting someone into your home, you can join our password scheme or request a password when making an appointment.