

Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive 2016/17



Strategic importance of stakeholder engagement



I am delighted to present this, our fifth annual stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability submission. We are now two years into delivering our 2015-2023 business plan for the North West and we continue to work with our stakeholders to deliver an efficient network that embraces wider social and environmental objectives.

Our plan, developed from this stakeholder feedback, is designed to deliver a cost-effective and responsive service to households and businesses, while supporting our vulnerable customers and preparing our network for an increase in demand and a low-carbon innovative future.

Responding to our stakeholders by developing our approach

Whilst we have developed strong working relationships with many local, regional and national organisations, we sought independent evaluation of our work. We worked with AccountAbility who are global-leaders in working with businesses to improve their performance. This is done by having a better understanding of the environmental and social impact of their operations, impactful stakeholder engagement and the reporting of their information.

AccountAbility delivered a review of our processes and procedures and we have implemented their recommendations to further improve and integrate our stakeholder engagement. We have a better articulated and embedded strategy underpinned by more robust processes as a result.

We have introduced a company-wide stakeholder tracker, a workshop for key internal stakeholders, monthly Executive reporting on stakeholder engagement activity, the Annual Strategic Advisory Panel Meeting (held first in June 2016) and regular Advisory Panels meetings.

We've also established an Executive-led Strategic Stakeholder Steering Group. This group supports and develops our policy and action plans. The group has prioritised a number of customer vulnerability projects such as improving the accessibility of our website for blind and partially sighted customers. The group also ensure that revenues earned under the Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) Incentive were, in part, reinvested into enhancing our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and developing our support for consumer vulnerability.

We have expanded the core team responsible for stakeholder liaison and involved a greater number of our executive team members and senior leaders in the process. The outcomes from our Vulnerable Customer Strategy can be found in Part Three of our submission.

In this year's submission, we present this enhanced strategy which aligns with and supports the delivery of core business objectives and key themes. As demonstrated on page 3 of this report, the strategy also aligns to the AA1000SES (2015) standard.

A company-wide responsibility

Stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability are a company-wide responsibility and it's important to me to provide leadership within the organisation on this. I was pleased to be able to chair our Annual Strategic Advisory Panel in June 2016. This was one of my first formal actions having joined the Company only six weeks earlier. I am committed to the need for businesses to engage and collaborate with stakeholders and know that such collaboration makes businesses more effective.

In my first year in post, my priority has been to build a strong relationship with my internal stakeholders; the colleagues and contractors who deliver our vital service to our customers, communities and our vulnerable. Details of my activity is outlined on page two.

Our Company vision is to be the "leading energy delivery business," and to help do that we're focused on delivering excellent customer service. This goal is supported by our company values: Customer, People, Safety, Performance and Innovation.

We know from our ongoing stakeholder engagement – including the significant work that went into developing our business plan for the current price control (RIIO-ED1) – that our stakeholders require us to deliver a network that is:

- **Reliable**
- **Affordable**
- **Sustainable**
- **Delivered with excellent customer service**

Consequently, all our stakeholder engagement activity is underpinned by these overarching stakeholder aims.

We are training our frontline staff to ensure that stakeholder engagement becomes a company-wide responsibility. This programme began in 2015 and will continue until all customer facing employees have undergone training.

From these foundations, we will continue working with our stakeholders to deliver, in collaboration with our partners, imaginative projects which meet our business goals and deliver significant regional benefits.

This submission demonstrates the actions we have taken during 2016 to improve our stakeholder engagement process. The benefits that these are delivering for our customers and the region are detailed in parts 2 and 3 of this submission.

Peter Emery
Chief Executive Officer

Electricity North West has demonstrated a laudable performance in developing and driving a stakeholder centric-culture within the organisation. Built on a strong and authentic governance structure consisting of a series of dedicated Advisory Panels linking the Executive level of the organisation with the operational level, Electricity North West has established a robust foundation for continual improvement and strong sustainable performance in stakeholder engagement activities.

AccountAbility assurance report 2017.

Demonstrating the Company approach to Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability



Our approach to stakeholder engagement is based on the AA1000SES – an internationally-recognised, stakeholder specific standard that we’ve adhered to and built our processes around for the past five years.

Working with AccountAbility to evaluate our approach and embed robust processes across our business

In 2016/17, we commissioned AccountAbility to review our strategy, our processes and procedures to ensure we were on track. We were, and we continue to develop our engagement to deliver the best possible outputs and outcomes for our stakeholders.

Electricity North West is in the process of responding to all of AccountAbility’s recommendations, building on our robust foundation and creating momentum for continual improvement and strong performance in stakeholder engagement activities.

Our approach includes strong and authentic governance with senior leadership management; strong commitment and focus to running stakeholder engagement activities, and robust systems to monitor and manage stakeholder engagement activities. To further support Electricity North West’s ambition and performance, we will bring further clarity and internal awareness to the stakeholder engagement strategy; extend the performance metrics and their link to incentives; and develop practical internal procedures and guidelines to support consistent and quality stakeholder engagement implementation.

This strategy has been developed in conjunction with our internal and external stakeholders to ensure that it delivers for both the business and our partners. It has been endorsed by our Advisory Panels and reviewed by AccountAbility, ensuring that it delivers strong outputs and outcomes.

Senior colleague buy-in

Our Strategic Stakeholder Steering Group, composed of six members of our eight-strong Executive Leadership Team, and embedded into the company structure over the last 18 months, ensures high-level visibility and accountability for stakeholder-related activities.

An Internal Working Group consisting of 11 senior business leaders meets every two months to plan and implement the outputs from the Advisory Panels.

Peter Emery’s personal engagement

Peter Emery commenced his role as Chief Executive Officer at Electricity North West in May 2016. Bringing considerable experience of collaborative and cross-sector engagement from his previous role at Drax, Peter is committed to the need for businesses to engage and collaborate with stakeholders and knows that such collaboration makes businesses more effective.

In his first year in post, his priority has been to build a strong relationship with his internal stakeholders; the colleagues and contractors who deliver our vital service to our customers, communities and our vulnerable.

This includes:-

- Drafted 38 weekly updates of our internal newsletter, Connect and 11 video blogs; blogs are viewed on average by about 250 people and Connect is read by around 1300 people every week.
- Presented at Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Roadshows. Last September and October, he led 16 hour-long sessions across the region which were attended by around 1200 of our people.
- Led Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Wider Leadership Team (WLT) events twice last year, these were attended by around 220 of our senior leaders.
- Led three SLT events this financial year, which bring together our ELT and SLTs to discuss the best way to deliver our company goals and ambitions.

Peter will continue to build on this throughout 2017/18 and also lead our external stakeholder engagement. Peter will again chair our Strategic Stakeholder Advisory Panel meeting to be held in June 2017.



Measuring success

Our strong stakeholder governance structure ensures feedback is captured and outputs from the Advisory Panels are reviewed and implemented. Each Advisory Panel is chaired by a director and supported by our Senior Leadership Team, who then implement the feedback and learnings. Our Board receives four updates a year outlining our stakeholders' and vulnerable customers issues, concerns and priorities. We'll build a feedback loop from Board discussions to our Advisory Panels this year.

Overarching business goals are used as key metrics to ensure business-wide engagement and so our stakeholders can see the value they bring and the input and impact that they have on our organisation.

Further development will be undertaken this year to ensure that the costs and benefits of stakeholder engagement can be captured and articulated.

Improved processes

A bespoke Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system has improved our record keeping and data analysis. We've also implemented a company-wide stakeholder engagement tracker which monitors the engagement carried out across the business, effectively capturing stakeholder views and expectations, and embedding stakeholder feedback within the organisation's strategy, activities and action plans. This ensures a consistent approach which delivers measurable outputs.

Stakeholder engagement health check

An annual independent audit highlights areas for improvement, while ongoing feedback from each of the Advisory Panels ensures our approach reflects local and regional priorities. Electricity North West's updated strategy aligns more closely to the end-to-end engagement cycle, in line with the AA1000SES.

We ensure consistency across the business through our internal governance and engagement by our CEO, Executive Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Team and also through the publication of our stakeholder manual which ensures best practice is followed by aligning to AA1000SES standard. This is all tracked through our fully-audited Stakeholder tracker.

Impact on culture and organisational activities

Through the use of our CRM tool, stakeholder tracker and embedded governance structures, we ensure that our processes are aligned to achieving operational excellence.

Our stakeholder engagement strategy ensures our 2015-2023 business plan can be delivered and is supported by a stakeholder manual, which we updated in 2016/17. Aimed at everyone in Electricity North West, the manual describes how stakeholder engagement benefits our business; gives clear guidance to all colleagues on our strategic approach to stakeholder engagement; provides mechanisms for internal overview and scrutiny, and explains board-level commitment to stakeholder engagement.

Training for the front line

Working with external partners, we now train our customer-facing colleagues with the aim of improving their skills, confidence and motivation to identify and engage with potentially vulnerable customers. More details can be found in Part 3 of our submission.

Improved technology and processes

In 2015, we began using a bespoke Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which is delivering value in the way we store information.

Over the last 12 months, the system has improved our work with Priority Service Register (PSR) customers. We plan to have a strategic review of data acquisition for new PSR customers, in addition to achieving a data cleanse of our existing customers through a newsletter mail out, which we started in February 2017.

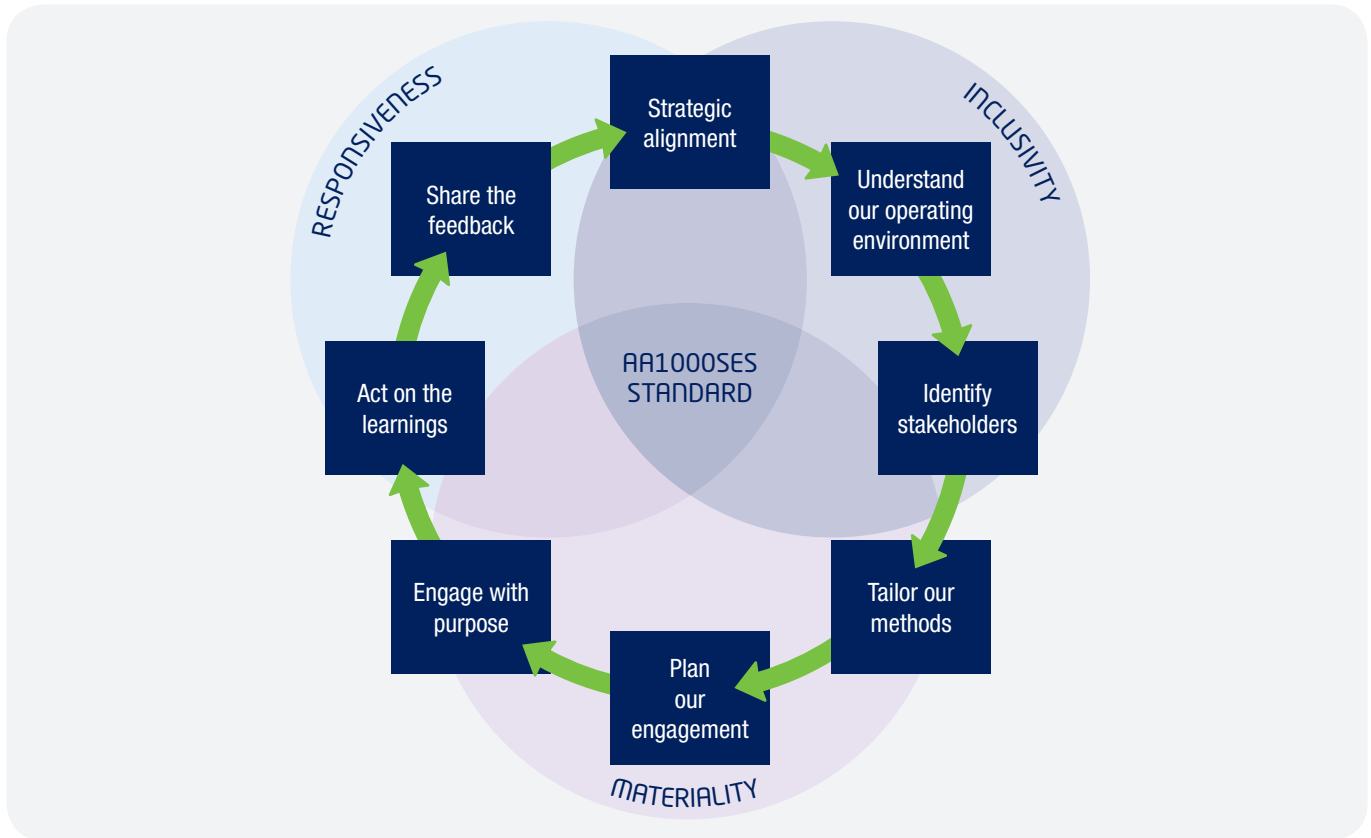
Highlights include:



Our Stakeholder engagement strategy

Our stakeholders told us that they'd find it helpful for us to articulate our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. Over the last 12 months, we've worked with AccountAbility and reflected on best practice within the sector to enhance our strategy. We've validated our approach with our Advisory Panels and we've continued to capacity-build to embed our approach within our business. This allows for more effective engagements and integration of stakeholder feedback.

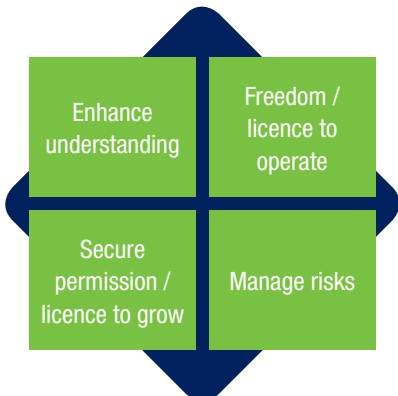
Our stakeholder engagement programme is driven by our Board, led by our CEO, owned by our senior management and delivered by all colleagues across the business. The following section describes our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. Each stage is described in turn.







Strategic alignment - delivering our business plan commitments, managing risks and acting on our stakeholder insight

Our starting point is to ensure that our Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Strategies are aligned to our strategic goals. Our activity should support the following Company Strategic Objectives:

There are four themes at the heart of our business plan; reliability; affordability; sustainability; and excellent customer service, ensuring we cater for the needs of vulnerable customers.



-  **Reliability** – Keeping the lights on and responding quickly to network faults
-  **Affordability** – Providing an affordable, value for money service for all, while helping to address fuel poverty and providing support for vulnerable customers
-  **Sustainability** – Ensuring our network can adapt to future challenges such as a low carbon economy and climate change, while keeping bills affordable
-  **Vulnerable customers** – Providing excellent customer service to all of our customers, especially those who are vulnerable or need extra assistance

Managing risks

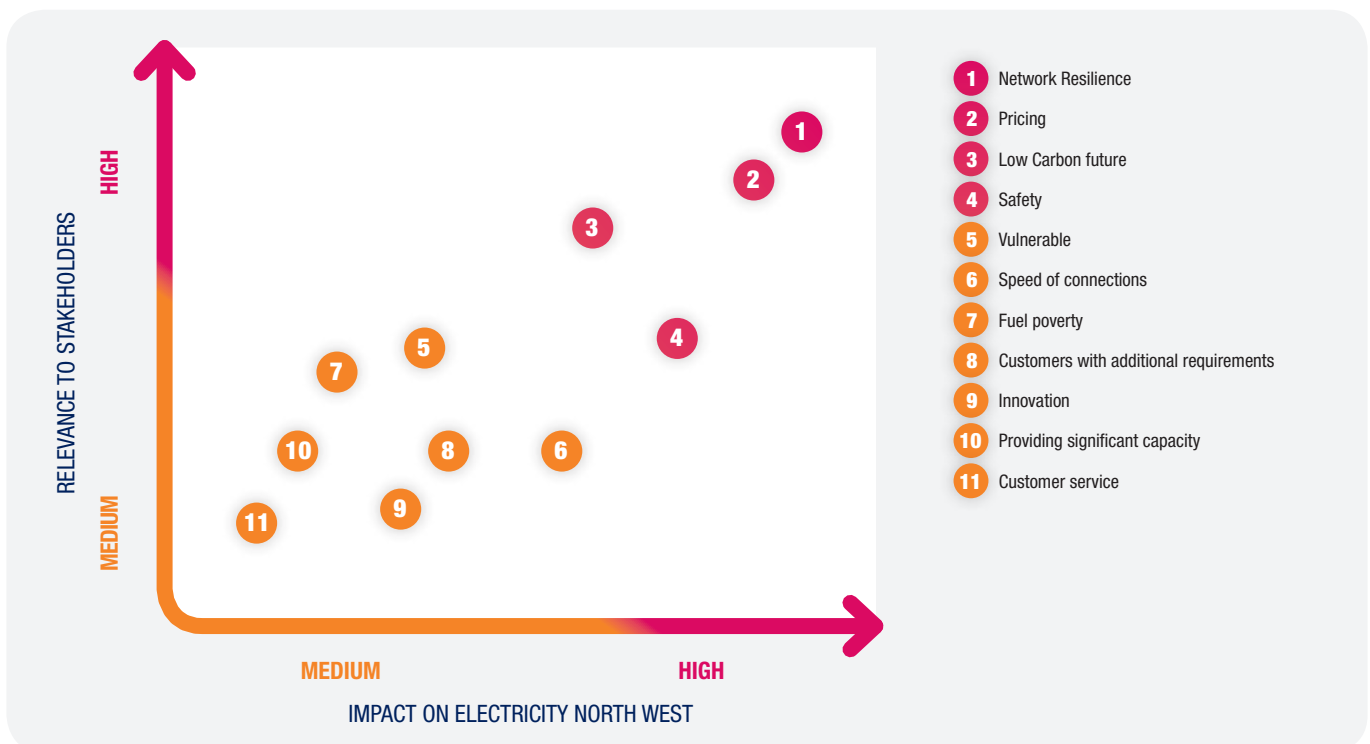
Our Risk Management System (RMS) is an effective and efficient way of managing uncertainty that results from the multitude of factors that the Company faces in pursuit of its business objectives. It is an approach by which the Company understands the level of exposure it is willing to take and considers risks across the business in a consistent way.

With a direct link to business objectives, the RMS includes the identification, assessment and management of current risks, controls that are currently in place to mitigate against these risks, and remedial actions to reduce risks to acceptable levels.

Risk identification and mitigation is also a key concern for us and effective stakeholder engagement informs and strengthens our approach. Our company-wide process to identify engagement risks and subsequent mitigation ensures these risks are identified and managed throughout the engagement process.

Understanding our operating environment

Working with our Strategic Advisory Panel in June 2016, which was chaired and facilitated by our CEO Peter Emery and our stakeholder team, we discussed our materiality matrix. Capturing our stakeholders' priorities and concerns ensures that our focussed engagement is delivering outputs that are relevant to the current issues faced by our stakeholders. Our materiality matrix was updated and endorsed by our Strategic Advisory Panel in June 2016. It is shown below. We will review the map at our Stakeholder Advisory Panel every two years.



Identify stakeholders

Ensuring that we are working with the right stakeholders is an ongoing process. We've committed to regularly reviewing this process to make sure that we are engaging with a broad range of stakeholders, and on the right topics, so that we can deliver the right outputs.

Our stakeholder mapping process, undertaken across the business, is owned by our Internal Stakeholder Working Group and our Advisory Panels. Our stakeholder map is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that all interests are being captured.

The following table shows how we categorise and prioritise the stakeholders we have identified.

Tailoring our methods

Tailoring engagement is an important step which ensures that we engage with the right stakeholder, at the right time and capture the relevant outputs. Our engagement is structured to ensure we don't have 'talking shops' with no outcomes and also to ensure that we make effective use of our stakeholders' time and resource.



Stakeholder group	Stakeholder requirement	Communication method
A	Our customers include anyone who pays for our services, including domestic, business and connections and distributed generation customers. We need to listen to our customers' views to improve our business and the services we provide for them.	Empower Joint projects, joint ventures, partnerships, multi stakeholder initiatives
B	From local government and schools to emergency services, MPs and national government we have a number of key relationships and a vast range of public sector stakeholders. Engagement locally is essential due to the unique nature of our business which directly affects local communities. Engagement nationally as a regulated business is also essential, ensuring that we communicate appropriately at all levels and recognise our role in the UK.	Collaborate Multi-stakeholder forums Advisory Panels Focus groups
C	Our industry engagement includes that with electricity suppliers, employees and contractors and other utilities. By working together we can gain the benefits of a range of experience and viewpoints to help us serve our customers more efficiently and effectively.	
D	We interact with a number of NGOs, including environmental and other lobby groups. We have a local and national perspective to our responsibilities. For example, environmentally, we must manage our own direct impact with local stakeholders, and nationally we must continue to facilitate the UK's move to a low-carbon future. Stakeholders include National Parks, National Energy Action, British Red Cross, Consumer Futures.	
E	Our financial stakeholders, including our investors, banks and credit rating agencies, clearly have a big impact on our organisation.	Inform Bulletins and Letters Brochures Reports and websites Speeches, conferences and public presentations
F	We often engage with local, regional, national and trade media to not only promote our business but also to inform our customers. We also work with advisory organisations such as AccountAbility and Business in the Community to improve our stakeholder engagement practices.	
G	For some of our engagement activity we may engage with specific environmental charities and education charities. Also the scope and purpose of an engagement may require engaging with web users and social media users.	

Planning our engagement

Collating and coordinating stakeholder engagement activity is key to ensuring that our stakeholder engagement is holistic and consistent, providing high-quality outcomes for the business and our stakeholders.

In order to ensure this, we take a company-wide approach to engagement, which is promoted throughout the company via our stakeholder manual, tracked through our custom built stakeholder tracker, and reviewed locally and at a corporate level.



Engage with purpose

Following our strategic approach ensures that we engage with purpose with our stakeholders. This important step ensures that our engagements are tailored to each stakeholder, their views and expectations, to deliver meaningful outputs.

Electricity North West has established a robust foundation for continual improvement and strong sustainable performance in stakeholder engagement activities. Their Advisory Panels enable alignment to the organisation's core business themes, and allow for the effective integration of stakeholder feedback within the organisation and the escalation of stakeholder concerns to senior management as appropriate.

AccountAbility assurance report 2017

CASE STUDY

Building effective relationships with our region's Members of Parliament

A case study of engaging with purpose

A review of our stakeholder map by our Internal Working Group identified the need for us to increase our engagement with the key stakeholder group of the region's Members of Parliament. The Company hadn't developed a structured engagement approach with these stakeholders and this was seen as a risk to the Company given the importance and influential role that this group plays in representing the concerns of our customers and our communities. Discussion with our Vulnerable Customer Advisory Panel identified the potential for approaching this group to support us in promoting our Priority Service Register.

This political engagement required a tailored approach that utilised our stakeholder engagement strategy, whilst acknowledging that the methods and outputs would be different from our formalised Advisory Panel governance structure.

We secured 32 meetings with our 53 MPs over a nine-month period; 22 MPs endorsed our Priority Service Register and issued press releases to coincide with our Winter-Ready Campaign. Six MPs have endorsed and issued press releases in support of our apprenticeship and graduate scheme.

Through dialogue we also identified and were able to respond to a number of their issues. These ranged from our investment in flood defences, to cyber-security to our approach to diversity in workforce planning. Follow-up meetings have been arranged with both the MPs and with stakeholder groups that they represent.

Partnership strategy

A subset of 'Engaging with Purpose', our partnership strategy is essential to guide the organisation in making robust choices on its investment in collaboration: the right issue area, the right type of partnerships, and the right type of partners to ensure the greatest value to the organisations. Our partnership strategy model is detailed here.

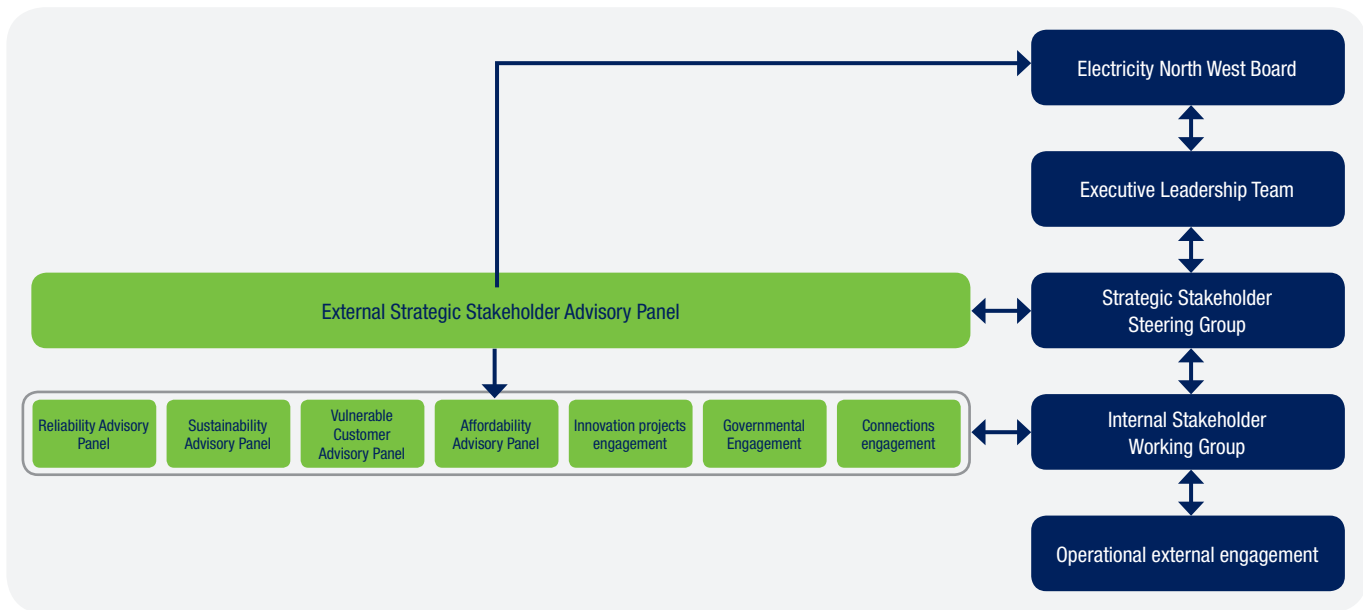
Developing effective partnerships

Strategic understanding	Data-led approach	Management of services	Systems and processes
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Act on the learnings

We want to ensure that there are robust internal processes that capture the input we receive from our engagements. The structure below demonstrates we have effective dialogue within our organisation which

ensures that we act on the learning and are able to feedback to our stakeholders. This governance structure delivers effective action plans at every level of the organisation aligned to stakeholder input.



Share the feedback

In line with the AA1000SES (2015) Standard, to which Electricity North West’s practice is aligned, once an organisation embeds and responds to stakeholder feedback and develops action plans, the next step is to communicate the engagement outputs, the stakeholder feedback and resulting action and response plans.

Disseminating our good work, and learning from others, is a key element of our strategy that ensures continuous learning and development. Our Future Networks Team are industry-leaders in dissemination of innovation and best practice and they are sharing this learning through capacity-building events across the business.

Engagement in action - a business-wide effort

Our Stakeholder Tracker provides us with a mechanism to record all the stakeholder activity undertaken by colleagues within our business. This gives us essential visibility about the nature, scale and impact of our stakeholder engagement activity. Engagements can be shared and discussed and action plans can be developed to respond to the important insights are provided. Analysis of the data in the Tracker can also help us to identify gaps or risks in our Stakeholder map.

Information from the Tracker is reported to our Executive Leadership Team on a monthly basis and our performance is discussed at their Operational Review Meeting. The Executive Leadership Team can then act and give guidance to colleagues on their response to our learning from engagement.

The following table provides an overview of the Company’s Stakeholder Engagement activity.

Detailed snapshot of our engagement in action

Total number of participants 618,670		Number of external participants 614,559	Number of internal participants 4,111
Type of engagements	Amount of events	Range of Stakeholders	
Committees Electricity North West chair	7	National Government departments including. Ofgem / Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	
Conferences we've presented at	39		
Co-ordination meetings for projects	40	Local Government including. Local Authorities 53 Members of Parliament	
Engagement meetings with stakeholders	296		
Forums we've hosted	24	Charities including British Red Cross / Mind / Samaritans	
Planning meeting regarding projects with stakeholders	38		
Site visits at the request of stakeholders	12	Consumer Groups / Advocates including Citizens Advice Bureau / Trade Unions / Rural England	
Teleconferences we've disseminated project information at	21		
Training sessions regarding projects and street works	12	Business Customers including BT/ Vodafone	
Workshops we've delivered on internal processes and procedures	43		
E-Newsletters we've issued	13	Domestic Customers including 4,500 research surveys	

We also undertake significant customer research. This insight and data informs all aspects of our approach to customer service for all of our customer groups. It also drives the development of the services we provide to our vulnerable customers.

The following table illustrates the customer research we carried out from April 2016 to March 2017.

Project Description	Volume	Expected Benefit	Status
Unplanned Interruptions Customer Experience Tracking	1350	Understanding of performance against customers' needs and what is required to achieve 10/10	On Going
Planned Interruptions Customer Experience Tracking	675	Understanding of performance against customers' needs and what is required to achieve 10/10	On Going
PSI Engaged Customer Panel x2 focus groups	40	Review the current cards and understand from customers what these should look like and the information they should include going forward	Completed
Ad-hoc quantitative STORM survey and basic package of reporting	150	Understand how to keep customers 'in storm' why are they opting to speak to an agent, how to improve the postcode module	Commenced
Ad-hoc quantitative COMPLAINTS survey and basic package of reporting	350	Understanding satisfaction from customers of the handling of their complaint	On Going
Ad-hoc quantitative COMPLAINTS survey half year	350	Understanding satisfaction from customers of the handling of their complaint and provide results by agent	Awaiting Results
Ad-hoc quantitative WINTER WEATHER survey and basic package of reporting	75	Understand what service customers expect from use during the winter	On Going
New PSI Card test	75	Once new literature has been developed a trial to test the customers thoughts using the Ofgem question set as a like for like	On Going
HL 580 Survey	75	Understand customers satisfaction when the HL is 580 but customers don't listen to the full message and the impact of further communication	Completed
Accuracy ETR Report	150	Understand	Completed
ICS - Customer Surveys x2	400	Understand the Customers views of performance as part of the service mark	Completed
Minor Connections Customer Experience Tracking	600	Understanding of performance against customer's needs, customer effort and ease and what is required to achieve 10/10	On Going
Business Connections Customer Experience Tracking	100	Understanding current performance and recommendations	Completed

Our advisory panel members are:

Sustainability panel

- Salford City Council
- Quantam Strategy & Technology
- Goldmine Business Development
- Siemens
- Stockport Hydro
- Procure Plus
- Contractor - Durkins & Son
- Carbon Co-op
- REG Windpower
- The IET Energy policy panel
- Salford FRE
- 10:10 campaign
- Irwell Valley Sustainable Communities Project
- Transition Wilmslow

Affordability panel

- Salford University Housing unit
- Energy Saving Trust
- Greater Manchester poverty forum
- Citizens Advice Manchester
- National Energy Action
- Cumbria Action for Sustainability

Reliability panel

- Environment Agency
- National Farmers Union North West
- Lancashire Council
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- New Economy Manchester
- Transport for Greater Manchester
- Manchester Council
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Major Energy Users Council
- Manchester University

Vulnerable customer panel

- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- Bolton local authority
- RNIB
- Lancashire Police
- Lancashire Citizens Advice
- Cumbria Action for Sustainability
- Your Housing group
- British Red Cross
- Emergency Planning & Resilience Lancashire County Council
- Alzheimer's Society
- Action on Hearing Loss
- Royal Voluntary Service

Accreditations

In the last 12 months, we have received:

- Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark Standard
- National Association of Pension Funds Pension Quality Mark Plus
- Institute of Customer Service 'ServiceMark'
- In-house team of the year' at the annual Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA) regional awards in Manchester
- Outstanding In-House Public Relations Team Gold Award in the Chartered Institute of Public Relations North West PRide Awards
- Crisis Management Gold Award in the CIPR North West PRide Awards
- Fleet Van Operator of the Year award at the Motor Transport Awards
- International Coaching Federation (ICF) 2016 Prism award. The ICF is a leading global coaching organisation with over 20,000 members worldwide. The Prism award recognises businesses that work towards outstanding coaching initiatives.

To give our stakeholders' confidence that we have a robust approach we also do the following:

AA1000APS

We have continued to follow the AA1000APS principles of inclusivity, materiality and responsiveness.

Independent assurance

- Formal independent assurance over our description of our stakeholder engagement activity:
 - 2016/17 assurance provided by AccountAbility
 - 2015/16 assurance provided by PwC
 - 2014/15 assurance provided by PwC
 - 2013/14 assurance provided by Deloitte
 - 2012/13 assurance provided by Deloitte

Corporate Responsibility (CR) Index

Reported against CR Index for fourth year maintaining our highest ever score, including 100% for stakeholder engagement element:

- 2016 score: 79%
- 2015 score: 79%
- 2014 score: 73%
- 2013 score: 54%

- ISO14001

- Environmental Management Systems standard
- National Association of Pension Funds Pension Quality Mark Plus
- OHSAS 18001 Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series for health and safety management systems
- Asset Management Certification (PAS 55 and ISO 55001)



Our stakeholder engagement in action

This section describes flagship projects which have either been delivered in partnership with stakeholders, or projects which they have influenced.

 **electricity**
north west

Bringing energy to your door



Review and enhancing our approach

Stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability are a company-wide responsibility and it's important to me to provide leadership within the organisation on this. I was pleased to be able to chair our Annual Strategic Advisory Panel in June 2016. This was one of my first formal actions having joined the Company only six weeks earlier. I am committed to the need for businesses to engage and collaborate with stakeholders and know that such collaboration makes business more effective. I have supported my Executive team in leading our four Advisory Panels.

In response to stakeholder feedback, we commissioned AccountAbility to review our strategy and our processes and procedures for Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability. Electricity North West is in the process of responding to all of AccountAbility's recommendations, developing our robust foundation and creating momentum for continual improvement and strong performance in stakeholder engagement activities.

I am delighted with the progress we have made over the past year in terms of both outcomes and business performance as a direct result of our stakeholder engagement.

Embedding change and building capacity

Moving forward we have aligned our stakeholder strategy more closely with our business plan and our RIIO outputs, which has significantly sharpened our focus. We know precisely what we need to engage our stakeholders about, and how we will measure the success of this engagement. The four Advisory Panels, made up of subject experts from a broad range of sectors, ensure we deliver our business plan in a way that maximises benefits for the region.

In this section (Part 2) of our submission we'll demonstrate that our holistic approach to stakeholder engagement is embedded within our business and describe the nature of the engagement activities we've undertaken and the action plans we've developed because of this engagement.



We'll describe how the outcomes align with our stakeholder engagement strategy and how they impact on our stakeholders. We'll outline the policy, procedural and cultural change that engagement has affected and share the mechanisms by which we monitor and report engagement and outcomes both internally and to our stakeholders. We'll also describe how we're developing 'best in class' innovative initiatives like the 'Power Saver Challenge'. We'll also give examples of initiatives which best serve specific interests of challenging groups and hard to reach stakeholders.

Refining our approach

Our pace of delivery has stepped up a notch and now we're into our second year of the 2015 – 2023 business plan, this year's submission demonstrates more than ever the close relationship we have with our stakeholders and the progressive outcomes of our industry leading initiatives.

With a robust frontline staff training programme in place to ensure that stakeholder engagement becomes a company-wide asset and skill that is everyone's responsibility, set alongside refined stakeholder panels and partnership collaboration, we are producing even more imaginative projects which meet our business goals and deliver significant regional benefits.

Peter Emery
Chief Executive Officer

As a Community Energy organisation involved in energy efficiency and the development of smart grid applications, we have found the communication and collaborative work with Electricity North West to be absolutely invaluable.

Their engagement work is first class and as a key stakeholder we feel we have an excellent understanding of the issues facing Electricity North West and that they have a good understanding of how our work might help solve these.

We feel listened to and supported.

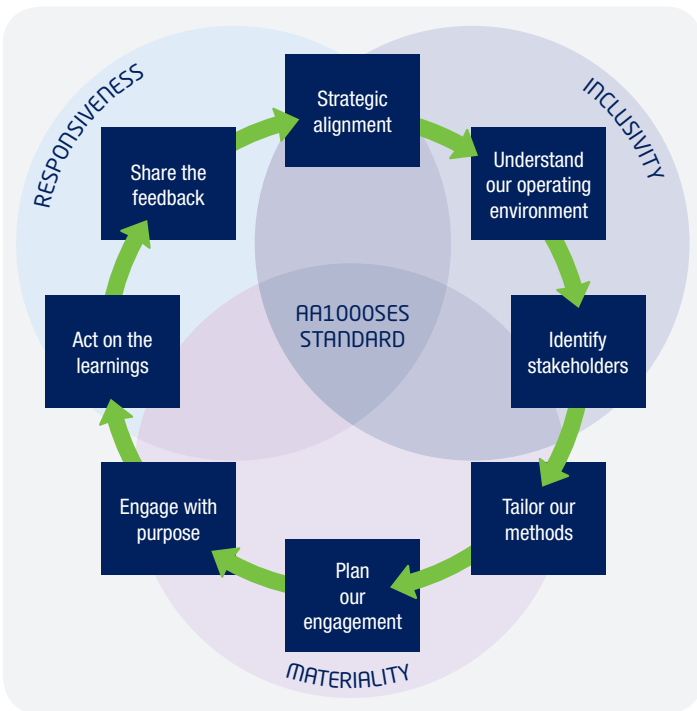
Jonathan Atkinson, Carbon Co-op

Focused and well-informed: An overview of our strategic approach

Our business plan will continue to deliver a host of benefits to the North West between now and 2023 – and by placing our stakeholders at the heart of the process, we are ensuring that what we do is informed and accountable.





But the reason we undertake stakeholder engagement remains the same as it was when we first started this process five years ago. We want to deliver a high performing business that delivers locally, regionally and nationally because we understand that in order for our business to be successful, our communities need to succeed. And that happens when we work together with our stakeholders.

To deliver, we need a strategy that supports this. We've detailed our comprehensive strategy and the business processes that underpin it in Section 1, but here's a view of our company approach to stakeholder engagement.



Embedding stakeholder engagement throughout our business - our four business themes

In order to ensure that stakeholder engagement is fully embedded in the business, we've structured our governance around our four core business themes, which form the bedrock of our stakeholder endorsed 2015-2023 business plan:

-  **Reliability:** Keeping the lights on and responding quickly to network faults.
-  **Affordability:** Providing an affordable, value for money service for all, while helping to address fuel poverty and providing support for vulnerable customers.
-  **Sustainability:** Ensuring our network can adapt to future challenges such as a low carbon economy and climate change.
-  **Vulnerable customer:** Providing exceptional customer service to all our customers, especially those who are vulnerable or need some extra assistance.

To support these four core business areas, our established External Advisory Panels provide input and scrutiny, assisting in delivery of the business in a way that maximises benefits for our stakeholders, for our business plan and for the region.

This report is structured in line with our four core business themes. This reflects the work done by each of our four External Advisory Panels and also the strategic alignment of our Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability approach.

Measuring success - capturing the risks and benefits

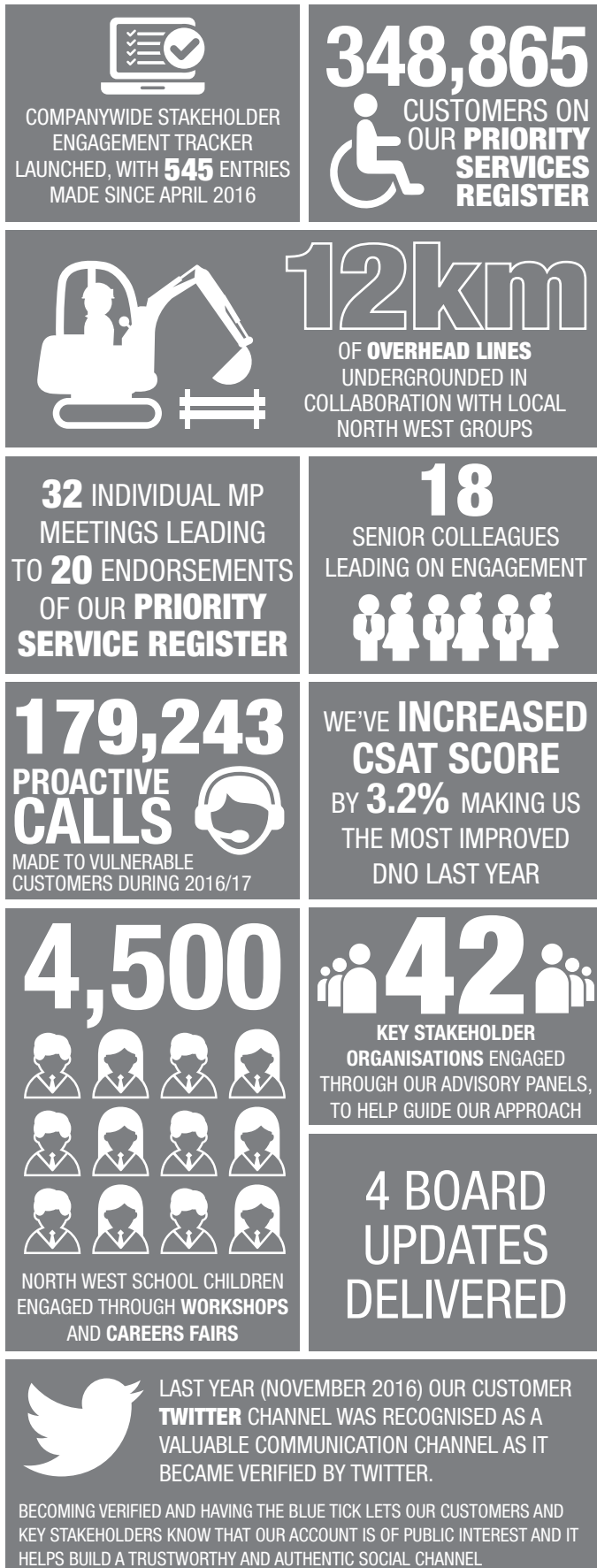
Outcomes and outputs from the advisory panels are captured and reviewed and implemented, where applicable. Our robust processes ensure senior management ownership so that these panels never become just talking shops. They deliver tangible and measurable outputs and outcomes that our stakeholders can use to hold us to account.

Quantitative and qualitative outcomes

We have increased performance further by providing more quantitative and qualitative outcome information on engagements conducted, and by articulating alignment with the Company's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.



What's new for 2016/17



Creating a smart, sustainable network



In our business plan, we describe our approach to developing a sustainable network as follows:

"Our sustainable network will be one which helps deliver the UK's ambitious greenhouse gas emission reductions by enabling low carbon technology adoption, reducing the losses inherent in electricity distribution and contributing to a substantial reduction in our business carbon footprint. We believe that smart meters and other smart technology can contribute as well and our plan demonstrates our readiness to play our role in the smart future."

We used this as a basis to begin our discussions with our Sustainability Advisory Panel and also as the basis for them to provide scrutiny of our ongoing business performance. The panel members were particularly interested in the challenge of meeting future energy demand in an affordable and green way; implementation of smart meters and the move to smart grids and smart cities.

These themes have been central to our approach over the past 12 months, and we are also incorporating them into a three-year work plan, which is being developed in partnership with the Panel. The plan will include measures and targets for the business to achieve.

Sustainability panel

- Salford City Council
- Quantam Strategy & Technology Ltd
- Goldmine Business Development
- Siemens
- Stockport Hydro Ltd
- Procure Plus
- Contractor - Durkins & Son
- Carbon Co-op
- REG Windpower Limited
- The IET Energy policy panel
- Salford FRE
- 10:10 campaign
- Director for Low Carbon
- Irwell Valley Sustainable Communities Project
- Transition Wilmslow

Panel sessions	3
Key themes discussed	Community energy support Working to deliver smarter connections
Key outputs	Future networks partnership development VPN project with Manchester City Council

CASE STUDY



Virtual Private Networks – Collaborative working to deliver sustainable, affordable low-carbon outputs

At our Strategic Stakeholder Advisory Panel in June 2016, our stakeholders discussed the development of private networks and off-grid energy users and they were particularly concerned about the impact of this on customers in fuel poverty. This impact would be 'hidden' and affect those customers least able to respond.

As we were developing our thinking on this topic we received a request for support from Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA) Low Carbon Project Delivery Unit to support its District Heating project. To maximise the benefits to the local community connected to the scheme, GMCA also wanted to examine the possibility of building a private electricity network to supply electricity as well as heat.

Our aim was to collaborate so we could provide community energy benefits on the existing electricity distribution network. Maximising the benefits whilst minimising the costs. It also avoids ongoing network costs being borne by a smaller group of customers, potentially negatively impacting fuel poor customers.

We focussed this collaboration on the Manchester Civic Quarter Heat Network project which serves Manchester city centre and surrounding areas.

This industry-leading project requires innovative changes to the charging arrangements for electricity. The sort of arrangements required by Manchester City Council were similar to those being requested by community energy groups, however no substantive progress had been made in delivering these.

Tony McEntee, our Charging Manager, led the work that focussed on identifying a commercial charging solution that required industry change which could be delivered in a short timescale. The idea, whilst simple in concept, is game-changing as it is the first of its kind.

Our proposed solution optimises the benefits of local generation supplying local electricity without installing extra costly new infrastructure, which helps address the vital issues faced by the energy industry of security of supply, affordability and decarbonisation. By supplying power locally costs can be reduced. A win for the business and the communities.

After agreeing this objective with our local authority partners, we began engagement with key stakeholders to help generate support for the initiative, including councillors and our regulator Ofgem.

Collaboration is key to success so it has been important to engage with all stakeholders. The proposals have been shared and developed with our Sustainability Advisory Panel. We have engaged with local 'energy pioneers' who see clear benefits for their communities in following this approach and also with local electricity suppliers and community energy groups who will make these schemes a reality.

All agree this initiative will help to solve the community energy issue and enable them to deliver real benefits to the region. The proposals have been developed into a request for a change to the regulatory framework and we are now awaiting Ofgem's feedback. They have been recognised as best practice by other distribution companies across the Northern Powerhouse so the benefits can be shared across the UK.

Discussions on this proposal are ongoing.

CASE STUDY



Future Networks – Leading the way in developing partnerships and sharing best practice

Innovation enables a modern business to deliver excellence for its customers which is why we place it at the heart of our business. Our innovation strategy explains the customer benefits of our innovation projects and demonstrates how we ensure we deliver value for them through a series of world-leading innovation projects. Steve Cox, Director of Technical and Engineering leads our future networks team.

We are now implementing one of our many low carbon network fund initiatives CLASS (Customer Load Active System Services) this has been identified as providing a potential £200million value to customers and Ofgem are encouraging other distribution companies to adopt our method as best practice. Our Board have committed over £14million of investment to roll out this concept commercially.

Collaboration happens internally as well as with business and council partners. From initiation of each project, we engage with colleagues so that they recognise and can shape the strategic implications changes could have for the North West and for the business. During its development key areas of the business have been involved and in turn identified other areas where it could be deployed and have helped ensure we provide benefits to all of our customers.

Since 2011 we have won over £42 million of competitive research and development funding for five key innovation projects from Ofgem's Second Tier Low Carbon Networks Fund and the Network Innovation Competition. Our two completed projects Capacity to Customers and CLASS are transitioning to business as usual solutions – delivering tangible returns on the initial investments.

In addition to these multi-million pound projects we have also delivered successful innovations through smaller scale projects and continue with our research and development activities under the Network Innovation Allowance, an investment of over £3 million a year.

Our projects

- Capacity to Customers (C2C)
- CLASS
- Smart Street
- Respond
- Celsius
- Fault Support Centre
- Smart meters

Our future networks team are industry-leaders in dissemination and, by working with colleagues from across the business, are building our overall capacity in this area.

I think this is a really important step towards setting up charging mechanisms that reflect the reality of local electricity supply, and I'm fully supportive of it. For small local generators such as community energy organisations, it will allow us to explore alternatives to the simple "direct sales or sell to the grid" options we have now, and also help us to get involved in both supply and demand management projects. It is the start of a process which could revolutionise the local generation and supply market.

Gill Fenna, Quantum Strategy & Technology Ltd

Ensuring a reliable network



In our business plan we describe our approach to developing a reliable network as follows:

“Our network is already **99.99% reliable** but we want to go further. Our stakeholders would like 100% reliability. This would mean us doubling the size of our network to make sure we had a backup when a cable, transformer, switch, pole or tower developed a fault. Given this would be unaffordable, we instead propose to improve network reliability by 20% from its 2012 level by 2019.”

We used this as a basis to begin our discussions with our Reliability Advisory Panel and also as the basis for them to provide scrutiny on our ongoing business performance. This commitment was consistently discussed at our Reliability Advisory Panel s throughout 2016/17.

Panel members are particularly interested in the interdependence between our network development and reliability plans and local economic development needs - particularly in the Northern Powerhouse city of Manchester. This includes leading smarter streetworks.

They also wanted us to consider the impact of network faults on rural businesses where there is a key energy dependency and the impact of both faults and planned supply interruptions for small businesses. The debate around the impact on small businesses paralleled the learning we took for our dialogue with Citizens Advice last year about the impact of school closures on employees with zero hours contracts. This is covered in more detail in part three of this report.

These are themes which we have continued to address over the past 12 months. They will also be built into a three-year work plan which we are developing in partnership with the Panel. The plan will include measures and targets.

Reliability panel

- Environment Agency
- National Farmers Union North West
- Lancashire County Council
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- New Economy Manchester
- Transport for Greater Manchester
- Manchester City Council
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Major Energy Users Council
- Manchester University

Panel sessions	3
Key themes discussed	Helping to reduce congestion and improve street works Helping ensure communities are resilient
Key outputs	Award-winning, industry leading Streetworks programme Leading our Local Resilience Forums Securing flood defence investment

CASE STUDY

Smarter Streetworks



Our customer research tells us that a big source of irritation is around streetworks and the seemingly un-coordinated approach companies take to digging up streets and roads. We are investing more than £1.9billion over the next eight years to upgrade our network, as well as working with other organisations to support major infrastructure projects which require new or diverted power lines. This has the potential to cause considerable disruption to the communities and customers we serve. With Manchester City Council, Transport for Manchester and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities on our Reliability Advisory Panel, we were best placed to form partnerships to develop innovative solutions to address these concerns.

In partnership with local, regional and national stakeholders, we're taking an industry-leading approach to reduce street works disruption and help shape sector-wide improvements. This work is led by Dave Reagan, Manager of our Streetworks Team.

We were involved in a significant number of joint infrastructure projects which couldn't have been effectively delivered without strong collaboration and partnership working. They include:-

- **Metrolink (Second City Crossing & Trafford Park Line)**
 - Multi-Utility Trenching lead by Electricity North West
 - Collaborative Working with TfGM & Local Authorities
- **Network Rail Electrification**
 - Collaborative Working with Network Rail and their principal contractors
- **Network Rail Northern Hub (T40)**
 - Multi-Utility Trench offering lead by Electricity North West
 - Collaborative Working with Network Rail & their principal contractors
- **Lancashire County Council**
 - M6 to Heysham Link Road (T40)
 - Collaborative Working with Lancashire CC and Costain
- **Preston & South Ribble City Deal**
 - Early Stage design input and collaborative working with principal contractors
- **A6MARR (Manchester Airport Relief Road) (T40)**
 - Multi-Utility Trenching led by Electricity North West
 - Collaborative Working with Stockport MBC & Carillion / Morgan Sindall Joint Venture.
- **Greater Manchester Growth Deal**
 - Design Workshops
 - Collaborative working with TfGM to promote collaborative working solutions

We've also worked on a significant number of joint infrastructure projects where innovation and collaborative working significantly improved the outcomes for North West customers. This allowed the business to trial and share a number of innovative practices including:-

- Joint Utility Trenching concepts introduced and actively promoted by Electricity North West on Metrolink are now becoming business as usual on most local authority and TfGM projects. Electricity North West took the lead on these solutions
- Collaborative Working Solutions with Principal Contractors and clients
- Global Traffic Management for Metrolink
- Design Workshops for Major Diversionary projects with Local Authorities and TfGM
- Implementation of processes for Proving Dead of cables and uncharted assets on Metrolink

CASE STUDY

Playing our part in supporting community resilience

Providing support to our communities in the event of an emergency or outage is high on the list of priorities of our Reliability Advisory Panel. That's why we take a lead in developing effective partnerships with our Local Resilience Forums. A 'Local Resilience Forum' (LRF) is a forum formed in a police area of the United Kingdom by key emergency responders and specific supporting agencies. Mandy Ingham, Security and Resilience Manager leads our work on this.

Over the last twelve months we have:

- Partnered with our four LRFs, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cumbria and Cheshire and are members of their executive meetings.
- Worked with Greater Manchester and Cumbria local authorities to prioritise sites should we have a major incident and to jointly develop plans to agree how we work together to mitigate these risks, utilising our learning from Storm Desmond.
- Collaborated with Greater Manchester on their Resilient Cities submission and participated in ongoing planning and implementation meetings.

Electricity North West currently chairs the utilities sub group for our Lancashire Local Resilience Forum and we are working in partnership with other utilities to ensure plans are in place to reduce risk within Lancashire.

We are also active in the Resilience Direct workgroup and are looking at ways to standardise how this system is used. This is extremely important as it is the main way of sharing information during incidents; this group is also looking at new functionality in this system around mapping.

We are members of the site clearance sub group which will help Electricity North West as we are putting in place a plan to deal with this increasing risk which could have major impacts in a community

Managing the risks in major incidents

Exercise Ferranti was a multi North West Local Resilience Forum exercise led by Electricity North West and other members. This exercise showed the effects of a major loss of supply throughout the North West and what impact this would have. It has prompted the LRFs to think about how they would work together during such an event. This engagement led to similar exercises with Greater Manchester Local Authority and we are in the planning stages of hosting a similar event for Lancashire.

We also attended a Cyber exercise with Greater Manchester. This is the start of a new piece of work for the Local Resilience Forum and we were pleased to be play our part in this initial group as Greater Manchester are piloting responses on behalf of all of the Local Resilience Forums to understand how to deal with a large scale cyber attack.

We have also just started work with Cumbria around a live roleplay exercise later this year on the impact of a reservoir dam burst. This exercise will take place in June. We also attend the OSCAR steering group which looks at issues mainly around the Sellafield site but is also now covering Moorside. We will shortly be undertaking a large piece of work with this LRF around risks within Cumbria.

CASE STUDY

Mitigating flood risk through partnership working

In the winter of 2015/16, many parts of our region which devastated by the impact of Storms Desmond, Eva and Frank. It's taken the region a long time to recover and we've played our part by investing more than £130m in 2016 to make our network more reliable and resilient. The work included cutting 505 miles of trees, replacing and upgrading £7.7m of overhead lined and upgrading £15.4m of underground electricity cables.

Of particular concern to those communities affected by a loss of power supplies was our investment in flood defences at our Lancaster, Rochdale and Carlisle sites. Agreeing the right approach to investment at each of these sites required significant local and national engagement.

Locally we had to assure the community about our intent and work with Lead Local Flood Authorities in local authorities and the Environment Agency to develop the right plan in the context of their existing and evolving approaches. Local Members of Parliament were particularly important stakeholders for us and three visited our sites in Lancashire and Carlisle. With stakeholder input we have developed innovative plans to stop using flood defence barriers and lift essential equipment above flood waters.

Nationally, we contributed to the Government's immediate review of the flooding event and worked with colleagues in the Electricity Networks Association, the Department for Energy and Climate Change (now the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy), the Cabinet Office and Ofgem to review and refresh policy guidelines.

We were able to complete this engagement and our on-site project work in a timely manner. This allowed us to reassure our communities in Lancaster, Rochdale and Carlisle ahead of the 2016 winter.

Electricity North West has been seen to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, employing a broad range of engagement levels and means that are suitable and appropriate for each group. Electricity North West has presented commendable efforts in tailoring engagement methods to the engagement objectives and the needs and characteristics of external stakeholder groups.

AccountAbility review 2017

Futureproofing affordability



In our business plan we wrote:

“We have developed a financing package which lets us meet our obligations, maintain a good credit rating and raise the money we need to pay for our investments. We believe we have struck an excellent balance between the allowances we need to meet our funding costs, the additional capital that our shareholders will invest and the incentive revenue we can earn from excellent performance, which is fair for our customers and us.”

We used this as a basis to begin our discussions with our Affordability Advisory Panel and also as the basis for them to provide scrutiny of our ongoing business performance. This commitment was regularly discussed at our Reliability Advisory Panels throughout 2016/17.

The Affordability Advisory Panel was particularly interested in working with small and medium sized businesses to develop a shared understanding of the energy efficiency opportunities and to work with fuel poor communities to develop shared approaches to these issues.

Affordability panel

- Salford University Housing Unit
- Energy Saving Trust (EST)
- Greater Manchester Poverty Forum
- Citizens Advice Manchester
- National Energy Action (NEA)
- Cumbria Action for Sustainability
- Confederation of British Industry (CBI)

Panel sessions	3
Key themes discussed	Helping to reduce Fuel Poverty levels Ensuring a varied energy mix in the North West
Key outputs	Building on the Power Saver Challenge Collaborating with Energy Saving Trust on Fuel Poverty Research Working with National Grid on the NUGEN nuclear connection, Moorside.

CASE STUDY

Sharing the learnings from the Power Saver Challenge and creating Power Saver Plus



Last year, we reported on the success of our Power Saver Challenge project. Working with Stockport Council, National Energy Action and social landlord Stockport Homes, we set a 12-month challenge to reduce domestic energy consumption by 10% by making small changes around the home. 60% of participants hit the target and more encouragingly, maintained these energy savings throughout the following year. Sean Leape, our Construction Repair Manager, led this work on behalf of the Company.

The SECV Panel were interested to know last year how we would share the findings of this successful project and if there was a ‘next step’ in terms of building from this project. We can now confirm that the final results of this project have been reviewed, validated and shared with others in the sector. We can also confirm that we are taking forward the learnings and positive benefits of the Power Saver Challenge to inform our current Network Innovation Competition project.

Improving the energy efficiency of homes and businesses supports three important goals: reducing emissions of CO₂, reducing network costs and reducing bills for customers. Named ‘Power Saver Plus’ our project will demonstrate how a Distribution Network Operator-led targeted customer energy efficiency programme could more effectively deliver against these goals and the Carbon Plan commitments. In freeing up capacity on the electricity network and reducing the energy bills of network customers, the project will allow for increased adoption of low carbon technologies. Such energy efficiency measures, linked to energy policy, could deliver superior overall electricity system benefits, including lower network losses and reduced reliance on high-carbon generation. Most importantly they could help lift our most vulnerable customers out of fuel poverty and warm cold homes.

Working with members of the Affordability Advisory Panel and the Strategic Advisory Panel, we have developed and refined our project proposals. A number of stakeholders have become project partners.

Power Saver Plus will run from January 2018 to June 2022 and will trial a range of energy efficiency interventions with a representative selection of customers, community energy groups and small businesses. The effectiveness of these interventions will be compared and analysed against a range of alternative smart and traditional approaches.

Key deliverables for Power Saver Plus will include an evaluation tool for DNOs to identify the most effective mix of interventions and an upgraded CBA model for RIIO-ED2 that will enable evaluation of energy efficiency network investment alongside traditional solutions, including whole system efficiencies and wider societal benefits. Cara Blockley, our Central Services Manager is leading this work for the Company.

CASE STUDY

Leading partnership working to secure funding to develop a sustainable Greater Manchester

Paul Bircham, our Director of Strategy, chairs the Greater Manchester Energy Group. In March 2017, the Group successfully secured funding of £21m of European Regional Development funding for low carbon innovation.

The Group includes representatives from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Department for Business, the Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Greater Manchester Universities, the Energy Systems Catapult, United Utilities, Peel and the Cooperative Group.

Greater Manchester has developed a 'whole place' Climate Change and Low Emissions Implementation Plan (CCLES) for 2016 – 2020 to provide more detail on the City Region's proposals for dealing with climate change and delivering a low carbon economy. Supporting this, the Sustainable Urban Development Plan will fund projects including identification and delivery of mechanisms to improve poorly performing building stock with low carbon development, particularly where this can also address ill health, poverty and productivity challenges. Securing this significant funding represents the culmination of a 12-month engagement campaign by the Group with local, national and intra-national stakeholders.

Paul will continue to lead the work of the Group and ensure that the best practice, ambitions and targets included in the plan inform our company-thinking.

Electricity North West places considerable effort and value on systematically seeking stakeholder input and views on the organisation's core services. For example, dedicated stakeholder focus groups aimed at building awareness with regard to Electricity North West's approach and process to manage Planned Supply Interruptions (PSI's) enabled a critical and constructive evaluation of the company's existing notification methods and gave rise to a number of practical improvements.

AccountAbility review 2017

CASE STUDY

Understanding fuel poverty in our region

Our Affordability Advisory Panel is concerned to better understand the incidence and impact of fuel poverty in the North West. This, for them, is a key starting point to inform both the Company and their own responses to fuel poverty. What they have told us is that we need an impartial expert in the field to conduct research into fuel poverty and find out where best we could implement solutions to get the best results.

As such, we're working with our partner, Energy Saving Trust to undertake this research and identify solutions we can deliver. Jonathan Collins, our Stakeholder Engagement and CSR Manager is leading on this work.

Fundamentally we are looking at what role can a DNO play in alleviating fuel poverty both tactically and strategically. We want to identify the scale of the fuel poverty problem and what role a DNO can play. The introduction will look at the scale of the problem and fuel poverty social impacts and the changes in fuel poverty understanding. We will also include a North West overview looking at a demographic break down of the North West (area covered by Electricity North West), housing stock types and relationship to fuel poverty, fuel poverty comparison between North West and national average (10.6%) and fuel poverty hotspots in the North West.

We will also focus on the details of the interventions and support that's in the market today – what's being offered and by who (and why – what has been learned about what works, what doesn't) and what help is available together with best practise examples.

We want to focus on the rate of progress, or success, of the current strategy and interventions and then be able to highlight the gap between policy objectives and what is being achieved today.

The report will look at where does a DNO fit in the fuel poverty cycle and what can a DNO do better than others regarding existing interventions. We will investigate what are its comparative strengths compared to organisations intervening in the market today. We are keen to understand what DNOs can do that is appropriate and different to the interventions in the market today and also what evidence is there for this.

Finally, we will identify best practise examples and what other actions a DNO can take to reduce fuel poverty and which organisations should a DNO partner with.

A first view of the research findings will be shared at our Strategic Stakeholder Advisory Panel in June 2017.

CASE STUDY

Working with our customers and securing value for them in Cumbria

From assisting battery storage trials in Salford, to new nuclear connections in Cumbria, we're active partners in delivering the right solutions for our customers and communities.

Moorside is the project name given to Electricity North West's project to facilitate the transmission works (referred to as North West Coast Connections or NWCC) to connect NuGen's new build nuclear power station to the transmission system. NuGen has contracted with National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET), as the current transmission owner, for initial supplies from 2022 and to commence its export from 2025.

Our role is to divert our existing network assets to provide a clear corridor for National Grid to build a new transmission network to carry the power generated. We'll then have to reconfigure our network to meet our customers' needs. The original cost estimate for this work was £250million with over £100million funded by North West customers. The current cost estimate for this work is £350m and we've worked closely with National Grid to ensure that this delivers value for customers in the North West. This robust approach has resulted in the contribution from Electricity North West customers being reduced to zero.

Our goal is to manage the customer impact of this work and to ensure that the project is delivered cost effectively for customers. Gary Townsend, our Moorside Project Manager, is working closely with Cumbrian councillors, local authority officers and representative groups to understand their concerns and preferences. Chris Gaskell, our Head of Estates & Wayleaves is liaising with local landowners and working with them to mitigate the potential impacts of this important infrastructure project.

During the autumn of 2016, we partnered with National Grid in a significant community consultation exercise. We supported 30 local events which were attended by around 2.2k customers and were able to present our proposals and to listen to their thoughts, concerns and feedback. This informed our discussions with National Grid about our build proposals.

We've also worked closely with Connections customers to ensure that they have appropriate information, provided in a timely manner, to help them manage the potential impact of a deferment on their business development and investment decisions. Steffan Jones, our Infrastructure Solutions Manager has led this work.

Notable efforts have been evidenced with regard to ENWL's post-engagement follow up with stakeholders, through the timely development and communication of engagement outputs and action plans. The approval of the latter is built into the Advisory Panel stakeholder meetings process.

AccountAbility assurance report 2017

Building inclusivity through service



In our business plan, we committed to:

"...provide excellent customer service for all our different customer groups. We will make sure customers can contact us quickly and easily through the most convenient channel for them. We will provide them with accurate and timely information and take ownership of their issues."

We used this as a basis to begin our discussions with our Vulnerable Customer Advisory Panel and also as the basis for them to provide scrutiny on our ongoing business performance. This commitment was regularly discussed at our Vulnerable Customer Advisory Panel throughout 2016/17.

We will deliver additional assistance to our vulnerable customers in each year of RIIO-ED1. We will support this direct assistance with a co-ordinated programme which brings together companies, agencies, charities and other groups in the North West to develop integrated plans to help address fuel poverty. More detail on our approach to supporting Vulnerable Customers is provided in part 3 of this report.

Vulnerable customer panel

- Stockport Council
- Bolton local authority
- Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)
- Lancashire Police
- Lancashire Citizens Advice
- Cumbria Action for Sustainability
- Your Housing group
- British Red Cross
- Emergency Planning & Resilience Lancashire County Council
- Alzheimer's Society
- Action on Hearing Loss
- United Utilities
- Royal Voluntary Service

Panel sessions	3
Key themes discussed	Communicating with hard to reach groups through all communication channels Improving the data we hold
Key outputs	Fully integrated data strategy, leading our partnership strategy

CASE STUDY

Our data-led approach to everything we do

We recognise that in order to develop the most effective partnerships with the best possible outcomes for our stakeholders, we need strong data to target our activity. By knowing who our customers are, we can focus our efforts much more effectively when developing partnerships and ensure the best outcomes.

In 2015 we invested £1.2million into a CRM system. In 2016, we developed and implemented our holistic data strategy that is delivering positive outcomes. More details can be read in part 3 of our submission.



CASE STUDY

Working with our Advisory Panels to put our data to work

During our Advisory Panel discussions, we were told that sharing specific data with relevant third parties before, during and after major incidents (eg weather warnings) would help with their response planning, as they were often uninformed throughout incidents, particularly 3rd sector organisations that were not part of LRF's.

Outputs

- Getting our data right is a priority, so we've issued our vulnerable customer newsletter to 29k customers, helping us improve our data and ensure customers are fully aware of what services are available to them.
- We now ensure all our people are trained and able to identify and register vulnerable customers on the PSR as they meet them in the field. This helps ensure that customers are registered at the right time, without unnecessary delay.
- We're working with our partners in the industry to help facilitate data-sharing between agencies, to help ensure that in the event of an emergency, our customers get the right level of support, at the right time.



CASE STUDY

Our digital customer strategy – putting vulnerable and hard to reach customers at the heart of our digital innovation

The purpose of our Digital Customer Strategy is to develop solutions that are valued by our customers and allow them to digitally engage with us and access our services quickly and easily. This strategy has been presented to all four of our Advisory Panels for input and discussion and to ensure we're capturing what our stakeholders require and that we're benefitting from their insights and experience.

We now have a three year plan, endorsed by our Advisory Panels, which:-

- creates the foundations for digital excellence
- uses high quality data to create meaningful insights about our customers and their changing needs, particular for our most vulnerable customers
- enables collaboration between ourselves, our customers and the partner organisations we work with eg British Red Cross, local resilience forums
- allows us to prioritise investment to those services with the greatest positive impact on customers
- is flexible enough to support
 - rapidly changing customer needs
 - technological uncertainty
 - a wider network of welfare partners
 - the smart meter and smart grid future



CASE STUDY

Stakeholder-led approach to website redevelopment – to better serve vulnerable and hard to reach groups

We discussed our intention to redevelop our website with the SECV panel last year and we committed to ensuring that the needs of vulnerable and hard to reach customers would be central to our approach. Our Advisory Panel were also able to provide helpful insight and experience into how we could achieve these aims.

In response to this input, we haven't waited for the new website and have introduced a series of updates to improve our existing website, including:

- Working with the British Deaf Association (BDA) to create sign language videos to support our customer service offering.
- Working alongside the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) to ensure that our blind, pan and partially sighted customers can navigate across our website with ease
- A new 'emergency page' solution to ensure more direct and resilient communications to end user of the website during an incident
- Improvements to the power outage map solution to enable it to handle higher volumes of outages and end user traffic
- Improved 24/7 Service Level Agreement (SLA) with website agency
- Improvements through load testing to ensure proven readiness for possible scenarios
- Easy handling of more of the basic information provision in emergency situations so that staff can focus on more bespoke and 'person to person' customer service provision during these periods
- Keyword targeting around weather and power cuts alongside geo-targeting to reach people who are affected by a fault or likely to have issues with a fault. We use Twitter and Facebook to promote our official accounts to encourage followers and improve the reach of our updates and information.

We continue to work with the Royal National Institute for the Blind on the development of our new website who will help ensure it meets their accessibility standards.

Being able to communicate and reach out to every single one of our customers is important to us, but we understand how difficult that can be. The RNIB are involved in the decision making to support and safeguard how our blind, pan and partially sighted customers navigate our website with ease. Our approach to communication is to make attempts to reach out to all customers with additional communication needs.

By taking a collaborative approach with RNIB, we will ensure our customers are supported when dealing directly with us to make their contact as seamless as possible. We will continue our partnership with RNIB to ensure all innovative services can be utilised.



How we support vulnerable customers

This section covers our vulnerable customer strategy and all key aspects of our programme to identify, engage and support vulnerable customers.

We examine the way we gather and store Priority Services Register (PSR) data; partnership building; training our colleagues and tailoring our support to meet specific customer needs.

 **electricity**
north west

Bringing energy to your door



Supporting vulnerable customers



Taking care of our vulnerable customers via tailored, proactive support is at the heart of our customer service approach. We have 348,865 vulnerable customers signed up to our Priority Services Register (PSR). Vulnerable issues range from physical or sight impairments, chronic or serious illness, mental health issues and many other areas.

However, the service we can provide them is only as good as the data we hold. Fortunately, as a result of launching our Customer Relationship Management tool last year, we have greatly improved the way we collect, store and integrate our vulnerable customer information.

We can now record multiple and transient vulnerabilities and provide staff with a clear structure as how to log all contacts. This enables us to see a precise road map of the customer journey; who was contacted by whom, about what, and when, which can also be produced graphically. We continually assess feedback from customers on our PSR, to ensure what we do reflects genuine need. In this way, we can ensure that our data analysis translates into initiatives.

Last year, our data analysis demonstrated that we served 42,509 customers with hearing or speech difficulties and 29,798 blind customers so this became a focus. Working with the RNIB, we produced sign language videos to make our literature more accessible to all communities, and introduced our newsletter being sent out to our customers with sight issues in the form of a memory stick. In addition, all of our new connection customers now get a welcome leaflet that requests them to register any PSR customers at the address. By focussing on these areas we have increased the total number of PSR registered customers by over 11% on last years' volume.

As a single licence holder distribution network operator, it is key that we are smart with our use of customer money. Analysing our CRM data we identified that we had 65,858 customers who have no contact details other than their address, and 98,560 with email addresses. This understanding allows us to target our communications in a cost effective way.

We've also undertaken a customer survey with our vulnerable customers to get feedback on what is important with them. Responding to this customer insight and views expressed at our September Vulnerable Customer Advisory Panel, and following agreement and discussion of costs versus benefit with this, several changes to our communication channels were implemented. One of these has been the introduction of a new greeting system for PSR customers to assure them that they have been recognised as such and that their call is being transferred to a member of the appropriate team as high priority.

In addition, when 63% of our vulnerable customers told us that we should be proactive in communicating information in the event of bad weather, and 89% agreed we should provide advanced notice of imminent storms, we implemented this into our standard business operations.

We have also introduced a new process to ensure customers get 10 days' notice of planned disruption. We have invested in implementing a welfare advisory team to contact those customers currently on the PSR when they are affected by a fault in order to pre-warn them of planned works. This interaction provides the opportunity to check and update customer information on the system and ensure that we are meeting our obligations in tackling the specific issues that are relevant to our vulnerable customers.

We have also implemented a generator policy for planned supply interruptions which affect those PSR customers who are medically dependent on electricity. If 20% of PSR customers are affected by an interruption then we now aim to supply generation or welfare, such as hot drinks and blankets, on the day.

We are also continuing to focus on improving employee skills in order to upskill our teams and close the vulnerability gap. Investing monies earned through the SECV incentive, we took the decision to create a new dedicated, in-house Customer Welfare Team. This team of six advisors and Welfare Manager, provides dedicated support to customers in vulnerable situations. Following from this more robust, company-wide focus on vulnerable customers, all new staff now get vulnerability training as a standard element of their training. We have also embedded a process of training all of contact centre staff, plus our HR and recruitment teams, to ensure that they are briefed to take overflow calls, if necessary.

With one in four people being affected by mental health issues, last year we worked with Mind and Alzheimer's UK to educate our call centre team; a move that has meant we have done more on mental health training than any other distribution network operator. In addition, our staff have ongoing training with Samaritan's to help them to pick up on tones in a customer's voice that would lead them to enquire whether they want to receive any additional support from charities such as the Red Cross.

Through these continued efforts, we are making great strides to ensure our vulnerable customers are both identified, and fully supported.

Peter Emery
Chief Executive Officer

Highlights



Overarching stakeholder strategy

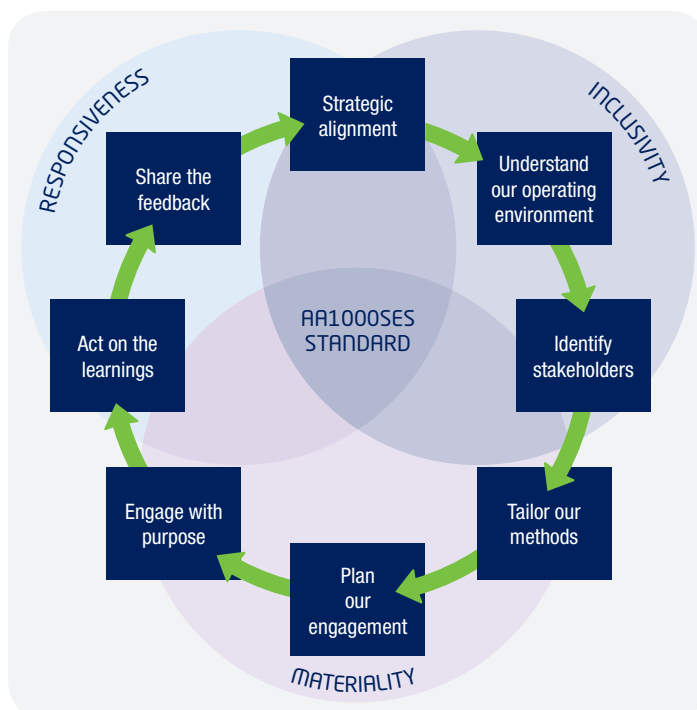
Over the last 12 months, our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy has been enhanced and is better embedded in the business, allowing for more effective engagements and integration of stakeholder feedback. Our stakeholder engagement programme is driven by our board, led by our CEO, owned by our senior management and delivered by all colleagues across the business.

Our customer vulnerability strategy

Our goal is 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. We have four key categories that will support the achievement of our goal which will improve our service accessibility. Each category has proposed objectives to clearly show SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-based, Trackable) measures of success for Electricity North West customers.

This strategy is embedded in our Business Plan commitments which was constructed in conjunction with stakeholders and agreed with Ofgem.

This document describes the activity we have taken to deliver in line with this strategy in 2016/17.



1. Strategic understanding of Consumer vulnerability and embedding into business at all levels

OUR GOAL

2. Working with partners to promote the Priority Service Register

OUR MEASURES

- Use innovative ways to promote our PSR
- Increase of customers registered on the PSR year on year – agree minimum target number
- Partnerships working together to target statistically low numbers compared to UK volumes
- Work with Partners to actively promote on behalf of Electricity North West the PSR
- Registration process and what is issued – cost of a welcome pack Ensure -100% registered from suppliers are welcomed to Electricity North West

OUR GOAL

3. Embedding consumer vulnerability into our processes and procedures

OUR MEASURES

- 100% Compliance with Planned Supply Interruptions pre warned PSR Customers & family members
- Contact of Low Voltage Faults customers within the first 3 hours, all High Vulnerability within 2 hours
- SME – Working group to develop support for this group
- Nursing homes – prepared to look after their customers

OUR GOAL

4. Using data as the foundation of our strategy

OUR MEASURES

- All data held in one location and maintained and reportable to drive the contact strategy
- Work with all sectors to data share for customers in need
- Use customer insights & CRM data to prioritise contacts
- Contact minimum of 100,000 customers per annum
- Contact all High Vulnerability Customers from the PSR by April 2018

OUR GOAL

5. Managing our welfare services and Priority Service Register

OUR MEASURES

- Implement the changes following agreement and discussion of costs vs benefit with the stakeholder panel
- Ensure these are accessible
- Carry out customer survey's every year to understand the priority areas to improve from our customers

Strategic understanding of Consumer Vulnerability and embedding into business at all levels

Our goal is to ensure that our services are available and made accessible to all customers equally. This follows the aims of Ofgem's Consumer Vulnerability Strategy (CVS); to protect and empower consumers in vulnerable situations, to reduce the likelihood and impact of vulnerability, and to ensure all consumers can access market benefits.

Our strategic understanding and commitment to the role that network companies can play in tackling social issues relevant to vulnerable customers is underpinned by robust customer research, analysis of the comprehensive data held on our CRM system and insight gained from regular engagement with stakeholders through our Advisory Panels.

These inputs have been invaluable as we have developed our understanding of social issues relevant to the energy sector and those issues external to the sector which could affect vulnerability. Working with the Citizen's Advice to develop our understanding of the personal impact a school power cut can have on communities and families is one example of this. The insight we gained from the small business representatives on our Reliability Advisory Panel alerted us to the real hardship that their staff members can suffer if a business has to close for the day and there is no work is another example.

Our response to these issues requires us to review the design, planning and delivery of all services and the significant change we have made to our generator policy is an example of these changes in practice.

We have five Executive-led Working Groups focussed on improving all aspect of service to our customers. Each of these groups has 'Vulnerable Customers' as key focus areas. All changes implemented by the group must demonstrate that our service to vulnerable customer groups is either enhanced by the changes being proposed or maintained.

The Vulnerable Customer Advisory Panel continue to challenge our performance and strategic response to tackling social issues relevant to vulnerability. We're pleased to have agreed challenging targets to improve performance and increase impact with this group. We'll continue to work in partnership with them to deliver against these targets.

Our customer research and dialogue with stakeholders demonstrates that different vulnerable customer groups have particular needs and requirements. There is 'no one size fits all' and we use engagement to define and tailor our approaches.

At present, we have 348,865 vulnerable customers signed up to our Priority Services Register (PSR). We don't limit registration to types of vulnerability identified through the regulatory requirements and encourage anyone who needs this extra level of protection to register.

We train our colleagues to inform customers about the register at every interaction and also have encouraged them to register family members, friend and neighbours who will benefit from the service. Through our Leading Lights scheme we recognise and reward colleagues for going the extra mile to support our customers.

Vulnerable issues range from physical or sight impairments, chronic or serious illness, mental health issues and many other areas. Our research into customer vulnerability types showed that is our partially sighted,

hearing impaired and stair lift customers who are the most concerned if a power outage lasts longer than six hours, particularly through the winter months. In addition, customers in vulnerable circumstances, such as those with very young children, were also flagged as needing extra help and attention.

Our data on the needs of those with young children demonstrates the proactive approach our colleagues have taken to understanding instances of vulnerability. This category of 'need' has only recently been added to the register but we already have strong data on this group. As a result, we've looked at what service offerings we could implement for children under the age of five, and discussed investigating ways to understand what else could be improved upon.

We are considering carrying out annual customer surveys in collaboration with our Advisory Panels, to better understand priority areas for our Priority Service Register customers, and what we could do to improve them.

CASE STUDY

Citizen's Advice - collaboration

We have developed a project with the Citizen's Advice to promote the Priority Service Register to customers who access their website. A collective agreement has been put in place with them to refer customers who are eligible to go onto the Priority Service Register to DNOs who have agreed to be part of the wider collaboration.

They've agreed to provide details of eligible Priority Service Register customers to DNO's to proactively contact them to recruit onto the Priority Service Register which builds on the industry approach and underpins our involvement with the Safeguarding Customers Working Group.

This is a positive collaboration between all DNOs and Citizen's Advice and one which will benefit Priority Service Register customers, strengthening the link between Electricity North West's engagement and the organisation's Priority Service Register and data analysis, and reinforcing an industry-leading approach.

CASE STUDY

Priority Service Register Communications

Raising the profile of the Priority Service Register is key to ensuring eligible customers are aware of it and the benefits it offers. Our staff will also have family and friends who are eligible to join the Priority Service Register. To drive recruitment onto the Priority Service Register we have undertaken various internal communication campaigns such as family and friends. Further promotion included engaging with MPs to drive the Priority Service Register message.

During this period, we saw an increase in customers coming onto the Priority Service Register so are confident these activities drive the increase in uptake.

Working with partners to promote the Priority Service Register

Throughout 2016/17, we been developing our approach to partnerships and referral networks to identify and deliver solutions for vulnerable customers. Central to our partnership development strategy is the utilisation of the data we hold about our customers. Much of our effort in the year has been dedicated to understanding, improving and validating our data to ensure that it provides a robust basis for one to one support to customers, to inform business decision-making and to structure our partnership strategy.

Our strategy is informed by a clear understanding of which groups are represented on our Priority Service Register and our understanding of the benefits of existing partnerships. Taking this data-led approach ensures that we have both a wide range of partnerships with different organisation types and that the services we develop in collaboration with these groups deliver solutions more effectively. Our partnership with Lancashire Fire and Rescue is a good example of this.

Strengthening and improving our data also helps us to understand and respond to any limitations in our current approach. Comparing the data we hold to national and regional statistics helps identify groups which may be under, over or unrepresented in our Priority Service Register. This then informs our partnership strategy as we use this insight to build appropriate partnerships to mitigate these differences.

CASE STUDY

Your Support Your Choice (YSYC)

Your Support Your Choice (YSYC) is an adult social care agency based in the Blackburn and Darwen area. We met them at an Alzheimer's UK event in Blackburn and began our discussions about working with them. This collaboration publicised and promoted the Priority Service Register and helped us recruit its customers and service users onto the register and to reach out into a network of support across the region. This partnership has provided us with an effective conduit to a very hard to reach customer group.

Communication slides for 'People Behind Your Power' and Priority Service Register data were provided to enable communication via their onsite TV in their main office in Blackburn which would be received by many of their visiting vulnerable customers.

YSYC also placed an article in its monthly email bulletin relating to the work Electricity North West do around the Priority Service Register to further raise the profile. We also provided 2,000 Priority Service Register leaflets for its outlet and to distribute to service users to sign up to the Priority Service Register.

This was a really positive collaboration and something which reaches across a large area of our region to raise the profile of the Electricity North West Priority Service Register and benefits.

CASE STUDY

Disability Awareness Day Warrington (DAD)

We attended the Disability Awareness Day in Warrington to promote and recruit onto the Priority Service Register. The day consisted of advising eligible customers of the benefits of the Priority Service Register and recruitment. This was an effective event which allowed us to reach out to our customers and offer some dedicated advice relating to the benefits of the Priority Service Register to a high number of disabled customers.

We will foster an approach of collaboration across the next three years with the ambition to partner agencies dealing particularly with disability issues and promote the benefits of the Priority Service Register.

CASE STUDY

Lancashire Fire and Rescue

Following on from the devastation caused by Storm Desmond and Eva and crisis situations we found our customers in, we reinforced our positive contacts with Lancashire Fire and Rescue when supporting customers across our region during this time.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue undertake a Home Fire Safety Check service which includes a Smoke Alarm Replenishment programme for vulnerable customers across the North West area. We put an agreement in place to pilot a referral service of customers who contacted our Customer Contact Centre Welfare Team. Our staff now advise customers of the programme, ask if they wish to opt in and then send the details to Lancashire Fire and Rescue who would then add them to the list and undertake the safety check and replenish their smoke alarm via an agreed welfare visit. The pilot commenced in December 2016, within agreed postcode areas to test its initial success.

Our aim is to build a culture of collaboration across the North West. A reciprocal agreement was also put in place in terms of how to sign visiting customers onto the Priority Service Register and send this data to Electricity North West to obtain positive recruitment. Training was provided to the Lancashire Welfare Team regarding the benefits of the Priority Service Register to better support recruitment success.

This collaboration reaches out to the Lancashire area and offers significant safeguarding for the customers involved. It offers positive engagement for an element of non-energy related solutions for both parties which supports the welfare of all customers involved. It also works directly with partnerships to actively promote the Priority Service Register on behalf of Electricity North West.

Further meetings are planned to discuss rolling the programme out across all of the Lancashire area and to develop this approach with other Rescue Services.

CASE STUDY

United Utilities – Priority Service Register collaboration and website referral

We are working with colleagues in other utility sectors to share vulnerable customer data, ideas and best practice to establish more joined up ways of working. From understanding that other utility companies also have customers on an equivalent to the Priority Service Register, we are collaborating with United Utilities. This is a long term approach to support effective Priority Service Register recruitment.

We have agreed to signpost customers coming onto our website to United Utilities Priority Service Register to support their engagement programme and have a link and commentary on our website. We envisage further involvement in collaborative events with United Utilities to raise the profile of the Priority Service Register will follow throughout the next three years.

CASE STUDY

Royal Association of Deaf (RAD) – Future collaboration

Our customer data tells us that in respect of the national average, hearing, speech difficulties and deafness are the top five most common disabilities of our Priority Service Register customer base. It is particularly difficult to connect positively with these customers and commit to ensuring we can do this on an ongoing basis.

The use of British Sign Language (BSL) videos supports accessibility to our services and allows positive communications for our deaf and hard of hearing customers. The videos will act as a communication bridge to our deaf/Hard of hearing customers.

CASE STUDY

Stroke Association

To promote engagement in the Priority Service Register, agreement has been made with Stroke Association, Carers Network, in Blackburn & Darwen, to send out Priority Service Register literature. When directly contacting Stroke affected customers, the Carer network has agreed to raise the profile of the Priority Service Register during their on-site visits.

This approach reaches out to customers who have been affected by stroke and have limited movement via the carer's network who have direct access to high vulnerability customers across a large part of our region.

We have provided the Stroke Association with 2000 Priority Service Register leaflets and will continue to support its customers during visits.

Commendable strides have been noted with regard to Electricity North West's data management and integration within operational excellence. The organisation's dedicated Stakeholder Tracker and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools facilitate the monitoring of engagements conducted with stakeholders. In addition, their CRM tool allows for the practical and accurate tracking of information on vulnerable customers, information that is effectively utilised by the organisation in order to inform and drive customised engagement to vulnerable groups.

AccountAbility review 2017

Embedding consumer vulnerability into our processes and procedures

In last year's report, we described the implementation of our CRM system and the significant benefits that having this single, core business system provided to the Company in enhancing our ability to serve our customers and identify and tailor our support for vulnerable customers.

We've made further progress throughout the year and have ensured that there is high level of integration of our role as a network company, with wider social obligations, into our general systems and process throughout the business.

For example, we've incorporated awareness of our Priority Service Register into our recruitment process. New staff members are not only made aware of the service but are also encouraged to add details of appropriate family members, friends and neighbours to the scheme. Our Director of Strategy even made a video showing colleagues how to sign-up!

Robust use of data analysis provides us with management information which allows us to track and understand performance, understand and remove any barriers to performance and fully justify why we've chosen to address particular social issues because we can demonstrate an understanding of the value of these to our vulnerable customers.

We ensure our Executive Leadership Team are involved and kept up to date with a monthly report which is then distributed to our Senior Leadership Team for action. This ensures that decisions made are informed by the right data at the right time.

Last year, we described 'All about Eve', the video we'd produced based on customer's experience to inform frontline training and culture regarding customer vulnerability. We've continued to develop our approach and worked with a number of partner organisations whose expertise has enhanced our understanding of and ability to respond to a range of different needs and expectations.

A significant investment has been made in creating a dedicated Welfare Team. Investing monies earned through the SECV incentive, we've been able to enhance both our operational and strategic response. There is a very clear feedback loop from the monitoring and evaluation of our customer-facing teams to ensure they are identifying and responding to incidents of customer vulnerability.

Our activity is underpinned by data and research. The information we capture on our stakeholder needs is vital to understand the impact that external drivers and events can have on our vulnerable customers and to help us tailor our response to their needs. We surveyed 4,500 customers between April 2016 and March 2017.

We understand that vulnerable customers want to communicate with us using their preferred channel. We've developed our website to include Business Sign Language (BSL) videos and an online fault form and we plan to introduce 'chatbot' later in the year to enable customers to use Facebook to share their concerns and enquiries with us.

And our staff continue to 'do the right thing' day in, day out for our customers. This is recognised through our Leading Light internal recognition scheme and through our monthly Executive-level reporting to ensure that these efforts are visible and valued at all levels of the business.

CASE STUDY

New needs codes roll-out

We've played a positive role at the Energy Network Association (ENA) Safeguarding Customers Working Group, participating in driving the change to the vulnerable codes to ensure they are aligned to customers' vulnerability types and expected industry guidelines.

We understand the new additions to the Priority Service Register and what these changes mean to us. We committed to change our internal systems to ensure we can provide and receive industry data in order to refresh customer data.

A robust communication programme relating to the industry changes has been delivered within Electricity North West to ensure knowledge of the changes has been understood by all operational staff. This is further supported by internal communication articles within our internal communications channels; Newswire, Connect and Yammer.

Our Training Programme includes updates to all Contact Centre staff on the industry changes and what that means for us as a business and for our customers. This allows direct feedback sessions to be undertaken to ensure understanding of the impact of the changes.

Further training is planned throughout the standard training programme which will support enhanced understanding of the codes. This training will influence how we deal effectively with our customers and underpin our understanding of their varying needs.

CASE STUDY

Doing the right thing for Bury Hospice

We were approached by Bury Hospice as it was concerned at the prospect of losing power. We agreed to provide advice regarding Priority Service Register customers and how to support them in a power cut. During the visit, we gave advice on generation, a community approach to Priority Service Register and resilience plans. This visit really helped the Hospice both to understand its own commitment to its residents and to set up its own support mechanism.

Julie Kilgallon – Hospice Manager said:

'Following a query raised with Electricity North West with regard to resilience and emergency planning in the event of a power cut. I was visited by Pete Smith, Welfare Team Manager. He was very helpful and knowledgeable, giving us the appropriate advice and guidance on registering the Hospice on the Priority Services Register. He explained in detail how Electricity North West would help the Hospice in the event of such an emergency, including practical/welfare and medically dependent equipment. We feel more assured now that in the event of a power cut or serious outage that we would have the support needed to keep our Hospice running.

Pete also gave me advice which could be passed on to our patients in the community who were not aware of the help available to them from Electricity North West. Our patients can be vulnerable and live alone and dependant on medical equipment and oxygen at home. Pete left me with some information leaflets and forms which we can hand out to our patients who were not aware of the Priority Services Register and the help the Electricity North West could offer them.'

CASE STUDY

Working with the Samaritans to help our staff support those suffering bereavements

When undertaking pro-active calling with Priority Service Register customers, we identified that advisors were increasingly dealing with many sensitive issues including bereavement. These interactions with our customers are challenging for both our customers and agents. We realised that staff needed support from a professional organisation, so we approached the Samaritans who have professional insight and knowledge to train our staff.

Ensuring our staff have the skills and confidence to deal with customers is important. Gaining support from the Samaritans enables our agents to become equipped with the agility to react to sensitive situations our customers may raise. The course focuses on providing strategies for the advisors to de-escalate difficult circumstances and understand difficult feelings and circumstances e.g. anger, aggression, bereavement and loss.

Further focus is on advisors being able to close off calls positively and effectively. This will allow contacts we have with our customers to be managed professionally and ultimately offer an empathetic approach to the customer journey of our customers. There is a considerable cost of each session which confirms our commitment to understanding our customers.

CASE STUDY

Priority Service Register newsletter

This year, we created our first newsletter for our Priority Service Customers to reach out, connect and provide effective winter advice. Across the winter period we delivered the newsletter to over 29,000 customers. The newsletter builds on our existing work in keeping our customers updated to the services we offer and additional support including energy efficiency advice, preparing for winter and what to do in a power cut.

Our aim is to continue this communication with our customers to ensure they know both who we are and what we can do to help. We also want to offer customers some insight into the work we do and have some light-hearted communications and editorials which are not fully energy focussed such as recipes and crosswords.

Throughout the year, we will direct the newsletter at areas of our customers in vulnerable situations and who may be hard to reach like those with Hearing or Speech difficulties (including Deaf). These communications will provide accessibility to our services for all our customers.

Using data as the foundation of our strategy




Knowing who our customers are, and what vulnerability type they fall into, is important to ensure that we provide the most effective support, particularly in times of a power cut. In 2015, we launched a bespoke Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which has enabled us to embed our Customer Vulnerability Strategy into our systems and processes and improve way in which we engage with our vulnerable customers.

The enactment of the General Data Protection Regulations in May 2018 may require us to change the manner in which we collect and utilise data. We're working with our legal advisors to ensure we maintain the highest standards of customer service and partnership working whilst complying with this new regime.

Our CRM system allows us to:

- Immediately identify vulnerable customers during a power cut
- Record transient vulnerability
- Record multiple contact numbers for vulnerable customers
- Prompt our call handlers to enquire whether inbound customers need additional support
- Compile a single, streamlined data repository

Our data-led approach to partnerships has allowed us to create comprehensive targets and a plan of action on which groups to target for inclusion on our PSR. This ensures that our partnerships produce tangible outputs and positive outcomes for our customers in the North West.

PSR Category	Number of Customer Registered in Electricity North West Area 2016/17	% Nationally of Customers Registered in a Similar Category	% of Overall ENW Population 2016/17	Target Number based on National Statistics	Number to Hit Target	Specific Services Available	Sample 2016/17 Additional Activities	Partners
Hearing/speech difficulties (inc. Deaf)	42509	20.00%	0.79%	1,080,000	1,037,491	Social media, Register your fault webform, text updates, Chatbot, minicom	RNIB partnership to develop our Web site Introduction of Sign language for videos on web - PSR and Fault Commencement with Chatbot	 supporting blind and partially sighted people
Pensionable Age	230845	17.70%	4.27%	955,800	724,955	Winter Planned Supply interruption times	PSR Newsletter Winter Rules for PSI	
Unable to answer door + restricted movement & Physical Impairment	133638	14.00%	2.47%	756,000	622,362	Next of kin contact service Door step service Password service	Mobility Awareness events - Stroke Association collaboration Introduction of Door Step Visit	
Mental Health, including dementia and developmental conditions	21079	8.00%	0.39%	432,000	410,921	Emotional Support during a power loss	Additional Training for Contact Centre Agents to support with Alzheimers, Samaritans, Training	
Oxygen Concentrator	16705	7.00%	0.31%	378,000	361,295	Air liquide		
Families with young children 5 or under	1891	6.00%	0.04%	324,000	322,109	Regular additional communication	Update of all literature and website to reach out Embedded the change within the business Actively include in the contact centre script to promote	Our education partners
Unable to communicate in English	6525	2.00%	0.12%	108,000	101,475	Big word translation contract in place, use of mobile apps to translate on the door step	Refreshers across the business	

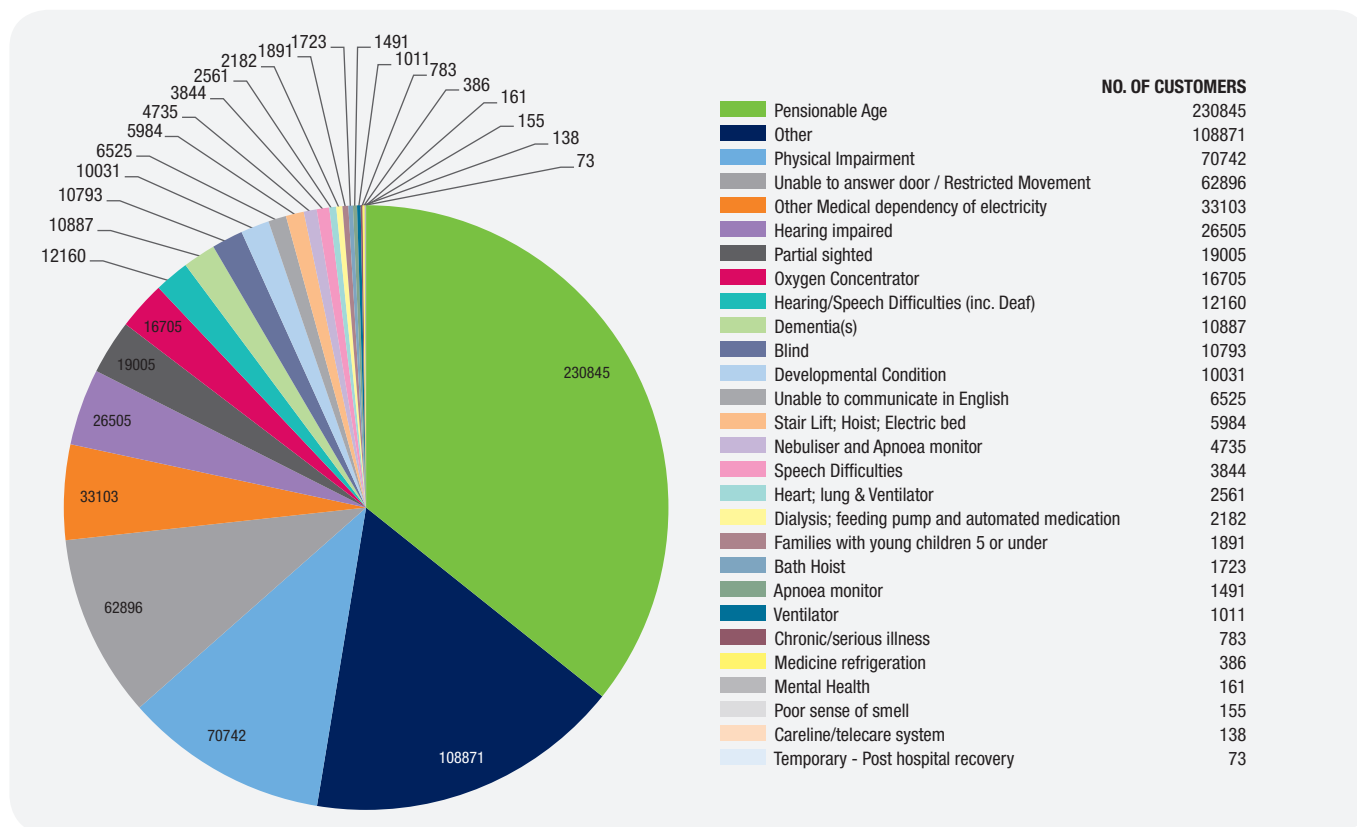
All of the above are included within the standard offering for Password service, vulnerable welcome packs, Winter and STORM warning texts, British Red Cross Support, Generation for PSI's based on our policy and requirement for a Door Step visit from Electricity North West

We're committed to engaging with our stakeholders to improve the data and information that we hold on vulnerable consumers and to use this data in a strategic way to build the right partnerships and services to support our vulnerable customers, to review and improve our performance and to identify any gaps or risks in our existing approach.

Utilising our Advisory Panels and our partnership strategy, we have a broad and inclusive range of stakeholders and we use our data to ensure that we have the right partnerships in place to help us deliver, improve and plan for our customers' needs and expectations.

We've made good progress in closing data gaps and we have processes in place to manage and deal with any data source consistency issues.

Vulnerability consumer data as of 31st March 2017



Our Welfare Team deliver our strategy for Priority Service Register recruitment and refreshing customer data and form part of the pro-active contacts we make directly with our customers.

Over the last year, we have been able to build on the existing Priority Service Register work we have undertaken with our customers and

CASE STUDY

Introducing a new data strategy for customer vulnerability -data sample of North West versus a percentage of UK by Priority Service Register category

Over the last 12 months, we have made further improvements so that we now understand geographically, who our customers are and what vulnerability they have.

Having such detailed information about our customers allows us to set a clear long term strategy to our communications and maximise our engagement with them. The data sample also allows for a more focussed and tailored approach to addressing all vulnerability types. This will benefit our customers and make the welfare support services we offer more accessible to them.

Understanding who our customers are, and who we have on our Priority Service Register, is important to us. Our CRM system provides us with information on to those hard to reach stakeholders by providing the core customer data we need to determine our customer needs.

increase the recording and refreshing of our customer data with over 179, 243 proactive contacts being made from April 2016 to March 2017.

A three-year plan has been introduced which will focus on high vulnerability customers initially. Further engagement will be with medium to low vulnerability customers and other areas of our customer base.

Managing our welfare services and Priority Service Register

Understanding and responding to the ongoing needs of vulnerable customers

Understanding the impact that external drivers and events can have on vulnerable customers can really help us to tackle issues external to the sector whilst providing core and tailored support. Our CRM is invaluable in enabling us to record transient vulnerability, when a customer is only vulnerable for a relatively short time (hospital out-patients; elderly customers in winter months, etc.). By recording an estimated end point for a customer's vulnerability, the CRM system prompts our call handlers to call them at that point in order to update both their progress and our records, taking customers off the list when they are no longer vulnerable.

Over the past 12 months, we have enhanced the way we support our vulnerable customers during power cuts, and given customers advanced warning of the arrival of severe weather. This provides us with the opportunity to better understand needs and to support customers in preparing for and responding to such event.

Steps in place to respond to vulnerable customers include:

Priority Service Register induction pack

Our induction pack for PSR customers ensures that when customers sign up, they are fully aware of the services available to them.

Standard offering

- **Home visits** - We have a number of 'customer champions' who work across the North West, who can provide home visits and offer help and advice at any stage.
- **Welfare packs** - Our welfare packs are made up of items which can help you cope without power, such as blankets, hot flasks, analogue telephones, glow in the dark torches.
- **Regular communication** - If your power goes off, we will keep you up to date with our progress via your preferred method of contact and let you know when we expect to restore your power.
- **Nominated contact** - You can also nominate a friend or family member to receive updates on your behalf or in addition to you.
- **Generation** - If you rely on electricity for medical equipment, we will (where available) be able to provide backup generation for you.
- **Oxygen backup** - We have a partnership with Air Liquide UK, who provide back up cylinders for anyone who is oxygen dependant.
- **British Red Cross** - 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.

CASE STUDY

Securing supplies for vulnerable customers through our enhanced generator policy

Embedding our support for vulnerable customers throughout the organisation is key. This covers everything from our offering to Priority Service Register customers in the event of an emergency, but also supporting customers with additional requirements during planned outages. Our updated Generator policy demonstrates how consideration of vulnerable customers is embedded throughout the organisation, from our customer team, through to our front line employees.

Design engineers must consider the impact of planned supply interruptions on different customers groups. The integration of our CRM into our investment and maintenance processes provides these engineers with the information they need to appropriately plan for, manage and mitigate the impact of an interruption on vulnerable customers. This following criteria is applied:-

	Spring Summer Autumn Temperature > 5C		Winter <5C		Extreme weather < 2C
	Duration < 5 Hours	Duration >5 Hours	Duration < 5 Hours	Duration >5 Hours	Any Duration
More than 10% of customer subject to PSI are Highly Vulnerable*	Allow PSI	Use generator or individual generators for specific customers	Use generator	Use generator	Use generator
More than 20% of customers subject to PSI are Vulnerable	Allow PSI	Use generator or individual generators for specific customers	Use generator	Use generator	Use generator
All other scenarios	Allow PSI	Allow PSI	Allow PSI	Use generators to limit PSI to a maximum of 8 hours	Use generator

High Vulnerability means anyone with electrical equipment requirements for their specific condition or medicine requiring refrigeration and with the conditions set out in the Draft Needs Codes.

CASE STUDY continued

Other considerations include:-

- Where use would limit the number of PSI experienced by an affected customer in a year to a maximum of two.
- If the weather is likely to be particularly cold (<2C) in line with the matrix overleaf.
- In circumstances where the PSI would cause particular hardship such as a nursing home, a school or a small business. These should be individually approved by the appropriate Area Manager.
- Where the total cost (direct and carding) of the work would be higher if generators were not used.
- Where the number of vulnerable or Highly Vulnerable customers impacted is excessive in line with the matrix below.

CASE STUDY

Better colleague through partnership with Alzheimer’s UK

Last year, we also worked with Alzheimer’s UK to educate the Electricity North West team about mental health issues, something which affect one in four people.

The importance of understanding this disease is helping our colleagues recognise signals when they speak to a customer to support them.

Providing our colleagues with the skills and confidence is crucial as these conversations can be misunderstood and create stress and anxiety for both our customers and colleagues.

It is encouraging to be part of a stakeholder panel that acts on making improvements so quickly, the introduction of British Sign Language videos is a great example of an issue being highlighted and acted upon with the prioritisation it deserves.

I look forward to seeing even more improvements in the months and years ahead.

Clare Redfern, Stockport Council

Training Programme Updates

Continual Learning Programme

We ensure all customer facing staff receive direct training on consumer vulnerability to the highest standards possible using a variety of learning styles. We now include the introduction of a structured training cycle which is mapped into an annual training diary. There are scheduled refresher training sessions to reinforce the learning for all agents. Our review includes producing an annual training module to ensure a clear identifiable quality function which is fit for purpose and up to date.

We provide an innovative training programme which includes the delivery of compulsory key tool box talks which offer best practice, hints and tips to our agents to aid their communications with our customers. There is a variety of learning techniques which also includes the introduction and expansion of e-learning to underpin core and refresher training modules.

Particular focus would also be placed on coaching and mentoring staff throughout the training and live environment. This will instil peer to peer coaching methodology and provide a culture of life-long learning.

Training is centred on the role of a front-line Customer Service Advisor and includes a robust new starter programme. Phase 2 training is delivered in alignment with the overall training programme with support from the subject experts across the business. Training consists of multiple modules spanning over four weeks based on full time delivery, which extends to six weeks if there is a business requirement to run part time training.

The training programme provides a safe learning environment in which to develop key learning outcomes for the role. The development of the training programme will ensure that we meet the learning needs of the business.

CASE STUDY

Local champions supporting vulnerable customers

We sent more than 250 packs to vulnerable customers during the storm periods and we have dedicated Customer Champion staff at each of our 14 depots to ensure the efficiency of the delivery and inventory. The Vulnerable Customer pack we developed in consultation with customer includes the following items:-

- Flasks
- Thermal Mugs
- Blankets
- Gloves
- Hats
- Fridge Magnets
- Pens
- Note Pads
- Hand warmers
- Glow Torches
- Analogue Phones
- Priority Service Register Leaflets
- Additional Support Leaflet
- Envelopes (Large)
- Envelopes (Small)
- Key ring torches
- Carrier Bags



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