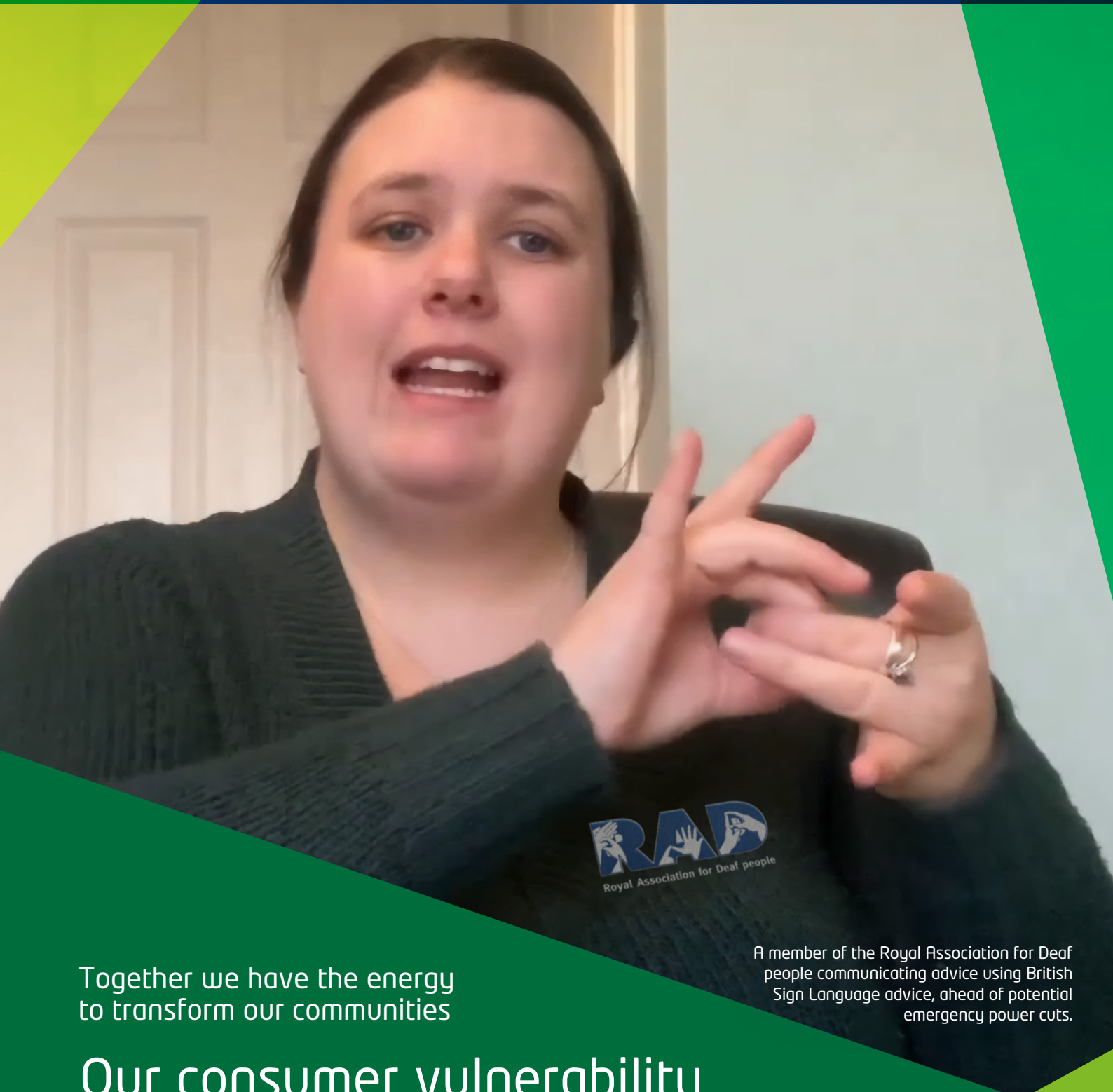


Each block or area is linked to a letter, ABCD etc.



A member of the Royal Association for Deaf people communicating advice using British Sign Language advice, ahead of potential emergency power cuts.

Together we have the energy to transform our communities

Our consumer vulnerability activity and the outcomes we have delivered

3

Part Three
Ofgem Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive 2022/23

electricity north west

Bringing energy to your door

As a distribution network operator (DNO) focused solely on the North West, we take pride in delivering power and extra care to 2.4 million properties and over five million customers.

Every year in our Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) submission we summarise how stakeholder engagement, as a central part of our strategies, is having a demonstrable effect on decision-making and on the outcomes experienced by customers.

A robust strategy has seen a step change this year in our approach to stakeholder engagement. We present a summary of our far-reaching and meaningful progress in 2022/23 in three parts. This document (**Part Three**) outlines how our strategies and effective engagement activities have ensured electricity users in vulnerable circumstances receive the most impactful support. At the heart of our strategy is a strategic goal.

Our submission highlights a range of high-impact initiatives delivered this year and is structured around five stakeholder-led strategic pillars which support our strategic goal.

Contents

Introduction from our Customer Services and Connections Director	1
Pillar 1 Build and maintain a resilient network	2
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Our strategic goal is to provide an inclusive and fair service for all users of electricity, recognising the need to maximise the reach of our services through collaborative, innovative working practices with a network of trusted partners.

2022/23 engagement highlights:



Sustainable communities

Featured on page two, our rural pilot scheme expanded the network of community groups ready to coordinate emergency support to vulnerable customers in Cumbria.



Inclusive communication

Featured on page seven, our new partnership with Amazon Alexa takes data sharing to a new level, enabling eligible customers to issue voice commands and register for the Priority Services Register in a matter of minutes.



Accessible support

Featured on page nine, our partnership work saw specialist energy advisors visit over 50 locations requested by customers. This enabled 65% of customers supported this year to access support services for the first time.

Case study key:

Responding to stakeholder feedback and to ensure our reports are as accessible as possible, we have improved their readability. We have increased the font size, while making changes to suit varying accessibility requirements including, an easy read version, the use of screen readers, and QR codes to access subtitled videos. The following symbols found throughout our report highlight features of our 2022/23 activities:



New

Initiatives which were introduced this year



Innovative

Novel or leading practice, based on benchmarking, for industry replication



Hard-to-reach

Initiatives which best serve the specific interests of under-represented stakeholders



Scaled-up

Embedded initiatives that are now reaching significantly more consumers than last year



Collaborative

Outcomes positively influenced or co-facilitated by sharing of best practice and resources.

Introduction from our Customer Services and Connections Director

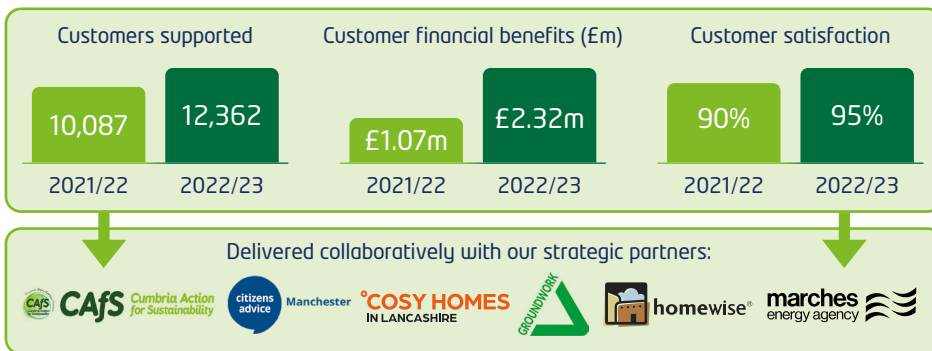
The daily interactions we have with customers makes us well placed to support those less able to keep safe and warm, those more likely to struggle or be left behind during the energy transition.

This year, the cost-of-living crisis combined with customers' personal circumstances and characteristics, introduced new challenges and exacerbated existing vulnerable situations. For the first time, **over 50% of fuel poor customers were in a negative budget and unable to afford essentials** such as food, rent, energy and transport, causing harm to their wellbeing.



We take immense pride in supporting our region. In response to the crisis we have collaborated with partners to give customers meaningful opportunities to avoid falling into negative budgets, having their energy supplies disconnected or having to choose between fuel or food.

Debt is the hardest thing to get people to talk about in public, but **new channels, such as our mobile advice centre**, took tailored advice to community locations where people feel safest talking. As a result, take-up of income maximisation advice increased to 69% of the households we supported and the **average financial saving per household increased from £106 to £187 year-on-year**. Other fuel poverty metrics we monitored at a programme level included:



We find inclusive ways to talk about being 'vulnerable'. This year we achieved the **BS18477 Inclusive Service Provision for Vulnerability** in recognition of our customer-focused approach to designing services. In response to customer feedback we renamed the Priority Services Register (PSR) as **the Extra Care Register (ECR)**, to better reflect the benefits of joining. We focused our stakeholder partnerships on overcoming accessibility barriers, leading to new channels and services. **We now communicate in British Sign Language (BSL), we share 100% of our data with regional utility companies and we share data with Amazon Alexa – a DNO first.**

We are proud to have delivered a 15% increase in 'PSR reach' (73%) this year, as well as carrying out an **industry-leading data intelligence process to maximise the accuracy of our data**. But it is the people behind the numbers and the service we provide to them that counts. We contacted 1.1m PSR members, including **personal calls to 14,700 visually impaired customers and those medically dependent on electricity**, to help them prepare for winter. As a result, 57% of new members felt less stressed and anxious about potential power cuts. 90% of customers who experienced a power cut were satisfied with the service they received due to improved updates and door-to-door welfare provision.



This year DNO collaboration has flourished and we led the charge by taking a lead role in ten initiatives and contributing to 25. We continue to look for ways to work together and target resources to deliver the best value for GB customers. More locally we have instigated a pan-northern **alliance between Utilities Together (North West) and Infrastructure North (North East)** to co-ordinate the replication of good ideas across neighbouring territories.



Scan the QR code to access Steph's video message.

A pan-northern approach to collaboration



This year we acted on the direction of the vulnerability experts we work with to become a **catalyst for community action to support vulnerable customers**. We introduced a first set of 12 rural schemes that will enable a better response to emergencies. We expanded collaboration with youth groups into disadvantaged areas, **enabling young 'change agents' to inspire action on climate change**, targeted at those most reluctant to act.

Every one of our 2,208 colleagues receive regular customer vulnerability training and take pride in caring about the needs of customers. This year we trained 400 extra colleagues to handle outbound incident calls, enabling them to make personal calls to **23,000 highly vulnerable customers to prepare them for potential winter power cuts**. This is in addition to the 14,700 calls we made to visually impaired customers to give tailored support.

The priority areas of our vulnerability strategy are presented in Part One, page five. The five pillars supporting this strategy are shaped by our stakeholders and form the structure of our submission. We are proud of the progress we have made but as we scale-up our efforts to provide in-depth support we will continue to collaborate, learn and deliver the most beneficial solutions.

We will also continue to mitigate risk. The UK's copper telephone network will be switched off at the end of 2025 and will work via a broadband connection instead. These changes will affect everyone who has a landline they'd like to keep using. While telecoms providers are obligated to ensure customers can reach emergency services, we are actively looking at how we can collaborate with them to build momentum in this area as part of a whole-systems approach.

Stephanie Trubshaw,
Customer Services and
Connections Director



Building resilient communities



► Strategic context

A review of customer feedback following Storm Arwen highlighted that vulnerable customers, especially people aged over 65 living in isolated Cumbrian communities, were ill-prepared to cope with prolonged interruptions. These communities lost communications, water supplies and struggled to access welfare support. A lack of public spaces and connectivity further hampered community-led responses to supporting vulnerable.

► What we heard

In September 2022 we launched a Community Resilience Fund (See Part Two, page four). Following this we reviewed the first phase of engagement with Cumbria Community Foundation and ACTion for Cumbria. Stakeholders thought the fund could help existing groups to strengthen their resilience, but that we should also look to develop potential in other community spaces. We shared these insights with our Consumer Vulnerability Panel who challenged us to pilot innovative ideas with local groups, since they are best placed to understand the needs of vulnerable customers in their own communities.

► What we did

We collaborated with ACTion for Cumbria to host an event at a town hall in South Lakeland. The event was attended by 14 people including representatives from the local resilience forum (LRF), Cumbria County Council and groups representing communities who lost power for extended periods during Storm Arwen. As a result of the feedback we received, we launched 'Extra Care Communities', a steering group of six communities in Alston and the Cartmel Peninsula, which pilots new initiatives to help people access local support.



Ulverston Resilience Group testing their new GPS radios

1 Action 1: Increasing the volume of groups ready to support

We carried out a survey to find buildings that could stay open and provide warm, welcoming and inclusive spaces in a power cut. The steering group collated contacts and invited 3,000 LRF members, parish councils, village halls and community buildings to take part. 60% of the survey participants were not part of a Community Emergency Plan (CEP), but 80% wanted to pilot ideas and train to become a hub. ACTion for Cumbria worked with this group and, as a result, new CEPs have been published on 'Support Cumbria' – a collaboration of partners who are working together to provide support to individuals during a major incident. **In response 140 community buildings can now safely support vulnerable customers.**

2 Action 2: Improving visibility of groups ready to support

We worked with the South Lakeland LRF to develop a **comprehensive list of resilience groups**, including those set up in response to Storm Arwen or following our engagement. The groups agreed to advocate the PSR to the vulnerable people who visit their spaces.

3 Action 3: Safeguarding communications

Stakeholders wanted to find a way to sustain communication between Category One responders and local groups during a power cut. After taking expert advice on effective communication systems from **Penrith Mountain Rescue**, we funded a pilot of **Star Link RV, an accessible, high-speed, low-latency internet** designed for permanent installation on vehicles. Star Link RV has proved to be resilient in rural terrain and delivered consistent connectivity in the Cartmel Peninsula which lost all communications during Storm Arwen.



Star Link RV

4 Action 4: Overcoming accessibility barriers

The six Extra Care Communities told us they could not afford resilience equipment. In response we launched a pilot scheme which enables members to **borrow equipment** such as radios or satellite phones during emergencies **from a central shared store of equipment** (funded by public grants).

5 Action 5: Forecasting to enhance preparedness

Some members observed that weather patterns in Cumbria are changing but they needed help to get a better understanding of weather forecasting and therefore a better understanding of the associated risk. In response we **collaborated with the Met Office to deliver an online seminar** to 25 attendees, including groups with an emergency plan (or thinking of writing one), and voluntary search and rescue organisations. The session, **a first for the Met Office**, helped participants understand weather forecasting, the use of Hazard Manager, a tool for emergency responders, and how to forward-plan.



► Stakeholder impact

Our work with our first six Extra Care Communities has empowered them to take better care of themselves. In these targeted areas we have:

- ✔ Expanded the network of community groups ready to coordinate a response by 20%
- ✔ Shared new ideas and learning across the network to inspire replication and scalability
- ✔ Signposted community groups to our Community Resilience Fund, leading to 16 applications
- ✔ Improved the connectivity of 25 groups with access to proven communications equipment
- ✔ Raised awareness of the PSR in South Lakeland, influencing a 13% increase in membership this year.

Collaboration to support frontline advisors and volunteers



We learned about the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the wellbeing of our partners' frontline advisors from our Consumer Vulnerability Panel, Citizens Advice Manchester and Energy Saving Trust. Colleagues were stretched to capacity and witnessing increasingly extreme levels of distress. SSEN said this was an issue for them too and had developed four resilience-themed webinars to help them and their partners cope with this growing challenge: Thriving in the 'new normal', Emotional wellbeing, Developing mental resilience and Performing under pressure.



We invited our partners' teams to take part in SSEN's free lunch-and-learn sessions, attended by 121 people in total. **91% said they were likely to take further action to support their personal wellbeing** following the webinars and 82% found they were very useful. In return, SSEN invited its stakeholders to attend our Groundwork energy efficiency webinars which were attended by 52 people.

Creativity holds the key to climate change action in deprived communities



► Strategic context

Without intervention, areas that have higher levels of deprivation and low social infrastructure are more likely to be disproportionately affected by the consequence of climate change. Neglecting these areas increases the risk of leaving people behind and weakens efforts to achieve net zero.

'Left-behind' definition

Being eligible for, or registered on, the PSR; being digitally excluded, financially vulnerable or living in areas of deprivation; having a lack of opportunity to participate in a low carbon future; or having a lack of understanding, knowledge or willingness to take risks on new technology.

Engagement barriers impede community action. We aim to inspire collective action from the ground up in left-behind communities.

► What we heard

In 2021/22 we worked with One Manchester Housing Association and three fuel-poor communities to understand how we can help customers become more energy-efficient.



This year we extended this work and 15 customers from these communities took part in **focus groups to understand attitudes to climate change**. Respondents, chiefly newer parents and grandparents, voiced guilt about the legacy their generation will leave for others. Key barriers to action were:

- Preoccupation with cost-of-living issues
- Unsure what to do first
- Costs involved in acting early
- Pessimism - can I make a difference?

Most participants said they took more notice of the younger generation, who were behind many of the eco changes in their households. This aligns with our pilot with Inspire Youth Zone Chorley where youth ambassadors campaigned on social media, including TikTok videos, to inspire other young people to get their households involved. Our Sustainability Panel challenged us to further empower young 'change agents' to influence behaviour change among 'laggards' and enhance the climate resilience of deprived communities.

Making it easier for customers to access extra help



► Strategic context

During Storm Arwen LRFs told us that customers needed access to devices like head torches which were challenging to obtain in bulk at short notice. The majority of 500 surveyed customers said they already had access to blankets but needed battery-powered radios and phone-charging facilities.

► What we did

We created four industrial-sized **'welfare cubes'** stocked with around 1,000 assorted battery-powered radios, phone-charging cubes, thermos flasks, headlamps and lanterns. Stored centrally, they can be deployed to any part of our region within three hours and replenished within 24 hours. These build on our long-standing provision of items directly to customers and fill the gap should extra demand arise during emergencies.

► What we learned

From our collaboration with SEN we adopted a component of their customer relationship model. This involves **a more localised approach to coordinating on-the-ground support between customer and operational teams**, supported by 'incident helpers'. We used cross-business collaboration to decide where to deploy welfare cubes and a new mobile support vehicle, piloting them in standard network incidents. We piloted this approach in July after an intruder broke into a substation and stole metal worth just £2, **which caused a power cut and surge to more than 200 customers in Salford**. We know that not giving a reason for a power cut is a common cause of dissatisfaction. Therefore, our incident helpers went door-to-door to explain the cause and the plan for switching the power back on, and distributed items from the welfare cube to those unable to access the support vehicle.

► What we did

We scaled-up our collaboration with Inspire Youth Zone Chorley, drawing on its franchise of 18 centres. We targeted Carlisle and Wigan, two of the most deprived areas in our region.

A group of 17 children aged 8 to 19 designed a 24-week inter-youth zone competition, aimed at encouraging environmental action and turning climate change pessimism into optimism. Secondary research confirmed Facebook as the best channel to reach 'Generation X' (35 to 50-year olds). A series of **'dragon's den' pitches** to an energy expert panel led to **six shortlisted campaigns reaching 8,000 households** advising them to:

- Use recycled pipe insulation foam to make draught excluders
- Turn down the flow temperature of their boiler to improve efficiency by 5%
- Take part in a 'no power hour' during a peak usage window once a week
- Challenge behaviours with catchy taglines like 'it's naughty to wash at 40'
- Borrow a plug-in monitor to understand which devices are 'power-hungry'
- Access free time-saving plugs to avoid leaving devices on standby.

► Stakeholder impact

We used a monitoring and evaluation app to measure wellbeing at the start and end of the project for the young people engaged in the project. 88% felt more aware of climate change, 70% felt their self-confidence had improved and 82% felt a sense of achievement. For the wider community:

- 80% of households in the target areas responding to a survey said that they had taken part in at least one challenge, with 50% noticing bill savings
- Campaigns generated a sense of hope, with 76% feeling more positive about their ability to influence climate action
- Energy efficiency awareness contributed to carbon and wellbeing benefits of £63,000, which represents a social value of £2.31 in excess of every £1 spent over 12 months.

► What we will do next

We believe learning from our Eco Warrior, Girl Guiding and Inspire Youth Zone programmes have a much wider application. We introduced Girl Guides to DNOs and then the Environment Agency. Together **we are developing youth challenge packs that focus on community hazards**, such as flooding, through a 'risk, ready, respond and recover' framework. The 'ready' aspect is about how communities prepare for emergencies, so they are ready to help themselves, and will signpost to the PSR.

Mrs Turner, a customer receiving support, said:

"This is wonderful. I wasn't sure what I was going to do and was thinking about walking to the local Spar shop, but it's a 43-minute walk each way. I've just had a hip replacement and couldn't have made it, especially in this cold weather. Thank you for keeping us fed and for the personal update service."
(10/10 satisfaction)



► Stakeholder impact

- Customers find it easier to access more of the support they need from our vans and helpers
- 93.3% satisfaction among customers experiencing prolonged disruption from a power cut in Salford
- A social value of £15.66 in excess of every £1 spent over 12 months, with 2,200 customers benefitting through reduced stress, anxiety and ill health.

The role of data in informing our partnership approach



► Strategic context

We engage with customers and stakeholder vulnerability specialists to help us learn and develop our approach, with inclusivity at the core of our service implementation. In Part One we set out the origins of our cost-of-living strategy, and in Part Two our implementation plan. Due to the cost-of-living crisis and the dramatic increase in energy bills, our plans to support vulnerable customers needed to evolve. Mindful that the impact of the cost-of-living crisis has not been felt equally across society, **our challenge was to identify the groups at greatest risk and think more creatively about how we can tailor our support to ensure it was useful, accessible and inclusive.**

► What we heard

Delivery partners responding to our state of the sector survey reported a 150% increase in demand for support services from April to September 2022. We hosted a knowledge-sharing session where stakeholders identified the customer groups asking for help:

- Scope highlighted that even before the crisis, **people with disabilities** faced, on average, an extra £583 per month to power essential equipment, alleviate pain and refrigerate medication. A £150 Government payment would not be enough to cover the cost
- The Bread and Butter Thing, said that 84% of its **prepayment meter (PPM)** members would struggle to pay an unexpected bill of £100 (27% higher than direct debit users)
- Kidney Care UK said 88% of people **medically dependent on electricity** expected to switch the heating off over the winter as they faced bills of £1,000 per year to **run a home dialysis machine**
- Northwards Housing shared concerns about PPM customers not claiming support vouchers and reported a 150% increase in **low-income families** needing immediate food or fuel crisis support.

We proactively engaged the local NHS who said that vulnerable patients, including **people of pensionable age**, were being admitted to hospital after their energy had been cut off, leaving trusts concerned that cold homes would cause a peak in excess winter deaths.

Our Consumer Vulnerability Panel challenged us to expand our use of partnerships to ensure our **matrix of support offers** (See Part One, page six) would reach prioritised customers, including those living with disabilities, chronically ill, medically dependent, fuel poor and/or using PPMs. Our awareness campaign took the following actions to reach at risk customers to increase their awareness of support available and identify the most at risk to offer in-depth support.

► What we did

We reviewed our social data mapping to identify the ten areas in our region with the highest prevalence of fuel poverty and lowest representation on the PSR. Eight of the areas were in Greater Manchester, which makes up 52% of our total customer population. **We used census data to target activities in areas with a higher prevalence of our priority groups.**

1 Action 1:

We shared learning from our 'Be Safe and Save' campaign with NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care. We funded a **'thermometer card'** with advice on keeping warm and how to access extra care during a power cut. 30,000 cards were distributed via Salford Council's winter packs, in-person social services visits, Salford Royal Hospital visitors and 37 doctors' surgeries. This meant we could access service user groups, which NHS data indicated were more likely to include chronically ill and low-income households. A **QR code** provided an easy way to access our cost-of-living support hub and onward partner referrals.



This year we followed good practice shared by NGED of using NHS engagement to drive referrals to support services among hospital leavers. We influenced a **change to the discharge toolkit of all NHS acute trusts in our region to signpost vulnerable hospital leavers to our Extra Care Register (ECR)**. We engaged Mayor Andy Burnham who challenged the local NHS to go further – with trusts agreeing to signpost all patients known to be medically reliant on electricity to the register.

2 Action 2:

We set up **two-way signposting of support with Bolton Council**. We referred fuel poor customers to their Household Support Fund and in return they signposted the ECR to anyone eligible to access health and care support services. This, alongside six cost-of-living drop-in forums, **reached 5,000 people with food, fuel and money saving advice**. By sharing best practice, we replicated this with Oldham Council and will extend to all ten Greater Manchester local authorities in 2023/24.

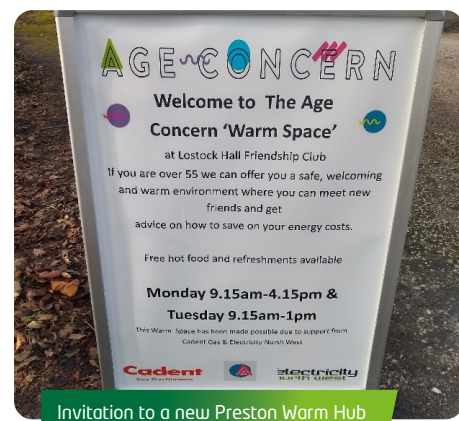
3 Action 3:

We collaborated with strategic partners Cadent, Age Concern and Central Lancashire's Dementia Community Links Team to **develop a warm space** in Preston, an area with an elevated risk of loneliness among the over 65s. The free, safe and warm space **supported over 100 people per week**. We worked with partners to provide training and advice (see right).



► What we learned

Working with Scope we engaged 183 people living with a broad range of impairments, spanning chronic pain, dexterity, hearing, learning, memory, mental health, mobility, neurodivergence, speech, stamina, fatigue and vision. 58% felt there was nothing further they could do to reduce their energy costs. **Energy saving efforts were pushing most groups to the limits of their wellbeing. We asked what we could do to help**, and the top three support needs identified were:



1 **87%** raise awareness of the Extra Care Register

2 **73%** help us to be better prepared for a power cut

3 **69%** signpost us to financial support available

Participants acknowledged that the potential for a power cut during the winter, on top of dealing with the cost-of-living crisis and their disabilities, created substantial anxiety.

4 Action 4:

Following our research with Scope we extended our partnership to use its online and retail presence to deliver a winter preparedness campaign, targeted at 1,000 of its members. The language, style and tone was developed by Scope to best reflect their audience and signposted the specialist in-depth help and grants available via our partners. In doing so, we acknowledged that many people were already doing everything they could to reduce their energy costs, but extra help was available. **25% of customers visiting the campaign webpage registered for the ECR.** Continued...

Pillar 2: The role of data in informing our partnership approach (cont.)



► Stakeholder impact

Research and data enriched our understanding of vulnerability challenges. Our partnerships reached 41,200 prioritised customers, enabling:

- ✔ PSR membership in the top ten areas to increase from 56% to 72%, accounting for 50% of all new members acquired this year
- ✔ The biggest gains in 2022/23 PSR membership were from targeted categories: pensionable age, chronic illness, physical impairment and mental health, which is evidence of greater inclusion (see page eight for further information)
- ✔ Partner referrals (inclusive of actions 1-4) enabled £31,000 of direct bill savings for customers while energy efficiency and safety education contributed to carbon and wellbeing benefits of 900k, which represents a social value of £2.41 in excess of every £1 spent over 12 months.

The launch of our Extra Care Register



► Strategic context

Last year DNOs adopted a standard definition of the type of customers eligible to be on the PSR. Benchmarking by the SECV Panel revealed that the percentage of eligible customers signed up by DNOs ranged from 45% to 70%, with registrations in the North West being the second lowest. Unless the best ideas or services are standard, consumers in one region will have different services to others. **Our challenge was how to achieve a step-change in membership to effectively put an end to the 'PSR postcode lottery'.**

► What we heard

Our research programme with Scope revealed that 73% of panellists not currently registered on the PSR, said they had not heard about it before. In response, we conducted further in-depth research with eligible customers to understand if there were any other barriers. We found that the word 'priority' caused confusion as it implied that PSR customers would have their power restored before other customers, which is not the case. Some respondents therefore assumed that they were unlikely to be considered a priority and this misalignment of expectations acted as a blocker to further sign-ups. Of the services we offer to PSR customers, 91% felt the main benefit would be enhanced communication during a power cut.

This influenced **an idea from customers to re-brand the service** to more accurately describe its benefits. We asked for suggestions from colleagues and our Customer Voice Feedback Panel, including eligible PSR customers. From this the 'Extra Care Register' (ECR) was born. **89% of a panel of 300 North West consumers said the ECR had relevance compared to 63% for PSR.**

We discussed the change in strategy with stakeholders. NEA were concerned that departing from the industry term may confuse customers, but Energy UK disagreed. Local stakeholder including MPs, said that ignoring customer feedback risked ongoing issues with the perceived relevance of the service and leaving customers disappointed through mismatched expectations. Others cited the precedent set by NPg in dropping the word 'register' due to negative connotations, in favour of 'membership.'

Sir Graham Brady MP said:

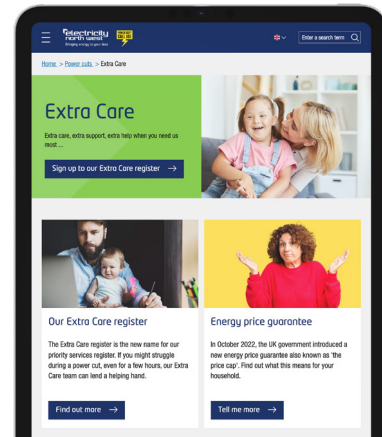
"The Extra Care Register is a fantastic example of how Electricity North West is taking practical steps to promote the well-being of its customers, especially those most vulnerable. I am very happy to support this new initiative."



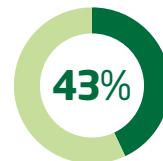
► What we did

On 1 August 2022 we **re-launched the PSR as the Extra Care Register**, promoting it across our region using a suite of channels including social media, radio and leaflets to 2.4m households.

We continue to refer to the 'PSR' with industry stakeholders but when we talk to our customers we use 'ECR'. Six months later we conducted a survey with new members and feedback included:

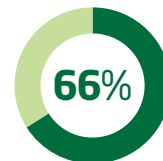


Key reason to join



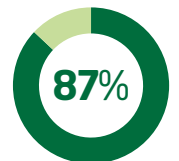
signed-up to access extra help in a power cut

The name



said the name is likely to encourage others to sign-up

Recommendation



would recommend other eligible customers to join

► What we learned

After DNOs shared communications with customers about potential rota load disconnections over the winter, it became clear that DNOs were receiving requests from customers to be added to a list of 'priority' sites to avoid being disconnected. This confirmed our customers' misinterpretation of the terminology.

In our region the media coverage of rolling blackouts influenced some people to ask to join the service, even though they did not meet the industry eligibility criteria. We did not force fit these customers into our ECR as this would distort the consistent method of calculating reach. Instead we took the opportunity to update their contact data in our systems so that we can keep them up-to-date during a power cut and help keep their homes and families safe.

► Stakeholder impact

Engagement with new ECR members revealed:

- ✔ 57% feel less stressed and anxious about potential power cuts
- ✔ 48% no longer feel the need to contact us because they receive proactive updates
- ✔ 28% have done something different to stay safe and comfortable in a power cut
- ✔ 11% have saved money on their bills by becoming more energy efficient.

Acting to remove known and unknown barriers through targeted engagement and local partners has increased our PSR reach from 58% in 2021/22 to 73% in 2022/23. Our goal is to reach a stretch target of 90% of eligible customers registered by 2028. In the next section, we set out a range of activities designed to achieve our goal, jointly agreed by colleagues and stakeholders.



Enabling a one-stop shop for prospective members



► Strategic context



By sharing data intelligently, utility providers ensure that vulnerable people are protected during service disruption and that households only need to register once to access multiple services. We implemented two-way data sharing with United Utilities (UU) in 2018, covering 99% of North West postcodes. By adopting Substantial Public Interest (SPI) as the lawful basis for data sharing in 2021, we removed the risk of excluding eligible people who cannot self-advocate. Our challenge was to **extend agreements to include the final 1% of postcodes served by three other water companies in our region, while actively supporting national PSR unification.**

► What we did

We took three key actions:



1 Action 1:

We **extended open data sharing agreements** with UU and Cadent, to Northumbrian Water, Yorkshire Water and Severn Trent, **to achieve 100% coverage of our region.**

2 Action 2:

We actively supported SSEN in their capacity as project lead, **collaborating with other DNOs and GDNs, to launch www.ThePSR.co.uk on 16 March 2023.** The new landing page offers a one-stop-shop for any organisation to help customers join the PSR, wherever they live. The service user simply inputs their postcode to be redirected to the relevant sign-up page.

We understood the value of PSR UK to our stakeholders, including its ability to transcend different naming conventions, and that it would need significant support to deliver. During weekly meetings over four months we fulfilled a dedicated support role including:

1. Concept testing and development

UKPN accepted our invite for a joint presence at the NEA 2023 conference in Birmingham and we used this opportunity to **test the PSR UK concept with stakeholders.** 88% of the attendees surveyed said they would use the new service. We used the feedback to refine the usability of the service, acting on advice from the NSPC and Marie Curie to ensure the website is mobile-friendly, incorporates accessibility software and includes BSL.



2. Communicating the new service

We **collated a database of 1,058 partner organisations** and drafted communications to promote PSR UK. The ENA, Rural England and NEA were among many who promoted the service.

3 Action 3:

PSR UK refers customers to the sign-up page of their electricity and/or gas distributor (water will follow). Therefore, it stops short of providing a single data entry process. In 2021/22 Auriga Services launched a new PSR portal which enables customers to register once and be added to both water and electricity PSRs. **We assembled Utilities Together partners to take part in a trial of the portal during which 532 eligible customers successfully registered on the PSR.** Our stakeholders concluded the portal is easy to use, accessible, and ensures accurate data updates, retention and transfer, meaning it has strong potential for national replication.

► What we heard

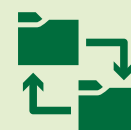
During a collaboration day at SSEN we shared feedback from our charity partner Age UK that an inconsistent approach to marketing the PSR across different geographic footprints was a barrier to raising awareness. SSEN had received similar feedback from NHS Scotland who wanted to reduce the effort needed to signpost patients to the correct provider. In response, SSEN joined forces with other utility companies to launch 'PSR Scotland' - a single platform allowing third parties operating across network boundaries to promote the PSR. **Following its success, we discussed how we could replicate the concept across GB.**

► What we will do next

We shared the learning from our Auriga portal pilot with the PSR working group, allowing us to benchmark the service against alternatives. The group agreed that a solution like Auriga is appropriate for the PSR UK landing page. Recognizing the importance of complete, granular and up-to-date data in supporting our customers, our ambition is to go much further with data sharing; we are close to signing data sharing agreements with four housing providers to identify vulnerable tenants.

► Stakeholder impact

- ✓ 94% of customers said it was easy for them to register for the PSR, using the Auriga portal
- ✓ We now share and receive data with key utility providers that serve customers across 100% of our communities. This gives us an unprecedented picture of their needs, while automatically offering comprehensive and coordinated support to those who need extra help. Customers only need to register once to access several providers
- ✓ PSR UK supports national and regional stakeholders by taking the guesswork out of which operator covers each area, making it less time-consuming to register customers.



A determined focus on the quality of our contact data



► Strategic context

Efforts to maximise PSR reach are counterproductive if data cleansing is less robust. Cleansing is crucial to tackle the large volume of customer data from energy suppliers with incorrect or missing contact information. Moreover, household circumstances change over time, and our data needs to reflect this. For example, a national [housing survey](#) shows that about 5% of the population will move to a different county each year. One of the pitfalls of inaccurate data is that we are unable to communicate with customers to provide extra care during a power cut.

These good practices rely on a customer response, so our challenge this year was **how to be more proactive in identifying changes without customers needing to alert us.**

We remove individuals from our PSR

- ✓ Who have not responded to three attempts to contact them over three years
- ✓ Who tell us their circumstances have changed and no longer need extra care
- ✓ Who ask to leave the register using a pre-paid letter and envelope, an online form, chatbot, telephone or by responding to SMS weather alerts.

A determined focus on the quality of our contact data (cont.)



► What we heard

In our customer research and complaint analysis following Storm Arwen, a common root cause of dissatisfaction was that it took too long for us to make compensation payments to 12,369 qualifying customers. On average, payments were made within ten days, however, it could take up to eight weeks if a customer's data was incomplete or inaccurate. Our CEO Panel challenged us to develop more robust mechanisms to deliver payments at scale.

► What we learned

Based on Lexis Nexis analysis we strongly suspect 5,668 vulnerable customers have moved out of region. **We are actively trying to contact these customers and are setting up a data-sharing process with other DNOs** to ensure customers do not miss out on support services.

Throughout the year we continued our proactive contact campaign, using accurate data to reach 1.1m members to check the information we hold is still relevant and appropriate. Responding to input from the Royal National Institute of Blind People **we made a personal call to 14,701 visually impaired customers to ensure they were not excluded and learned this was an effective engagement approach.**

► What we will do next

Ella Stafford, Customer Experience Manager, said:

“Compensation payments and data cleanse aside, we are excited about the wider applications of the partnership. For instance, we can replace communications about planned supply interruptions addressed to “the occupier” (a challenge we have for non-PSR customer data) to a named person. This increases the likelihood of important messages being received and acted upon.”



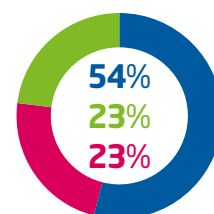
► What we did

We researched the marketplace and chose to **partner with Lexis Nexis**, a provider of decision-making tools using machine learning and artificial intelligence. We collaborated on a proof-of-concept data cleanse pilot and shared a database of 12,369 customers who received Storm Arwen compensation cheques. Lexis Nexis cross-referenced the data with a range of reputable sources such as the BT phone book, Companies House, Credit Bureau, Experian and the Electoral Roll and provided missing information (mobiles, landlines and email addresses) for 75.6% of the data.

As part of our decision-making arrangements (see Part One, page three), our delivery team shared insights with the Stakeholder Engagement Challenge Group (SECG). The SECG recommended rolling out the process for compensation payments as standard and **a full PSR data cleanse** – about 1m entries. Although we considered smaller-scale options, such as only cleansing ‘high vulnerability’ needs codes (1/3 of the database), our executive team approved a £280k business case to carry out a full cleanse. This decision was made on the basis that we needed accurate data to maximise the benefit of our winter preparedness campaigns and cost-of-living support.

67% of the database was successfully matched, with 77% of these records having additional contact information appended. We **developed a robust methodology** for the data cleanse which removed duplicate records and subjects known to be deceased and proactively verified customers believed to have moved to another address or out-of-region. The results were as follows:

Data cleanse action 31 October 2022	Volume
Retain the record - full confidence in accuracy	565,544
Retain - pending further validation required	234,785
Remove the record	242,532
Total	1,042,861



► Stakeholder impact

Improved marketing, partnerships and accessibility have influenced growth in our PSR reach from 58% to 73% of eligible customers this year - a net of 140,534 (up from 124,283 last year), reducing our gap to 27%. Our PSR now includes high-confidence and granular data on 73% of all eligible customers. This reach is inclusive of our improved data cleanse strategies which saw the removal of 242,532 records.

	PSR membership changes	2021/22	2022/23
Property registrations and updates	1. Enable a one stop shop for customers		
	Two-way data share with energy suppliers	161,518	191,558
	Two-way data share with UU	21,663	86,958
	Data received from Cadent	415	3,907
	Outcome	183,566	282,423 (+54%)
2. Make every contact count	We're 'Switched On' campaign additions	32,613	53,477
	Regional awareness campaigns	37,576	58,450
	Outcome	70,189	111,927 (+59%)
	Property removals	3. Proactively contact members	
Opt-outs in response to proactive contact		-129,472	-11,284
New Lexis Nexis data cleanse		N/A	-242,532
Outcome		-129,472	-253,816 (+96%)
	Net PSR (property) membership change	124,283	140,534

Pillar 4: Inclusive communication channels



► Strategic context

Our co-authored collaboration appendix describes common DNO challenges identified this year. Networks agree that it will become increasingly challenging over the next five years to find qualifying customers who are not aware of, but want to access, PSR and/or in-depth fuel poverty services. **Our challenge is to overcome barriers to reaching underrepresented groups.**

► What did we do

We achieved **accreditation BS18477 Inclusive Service Provision for Vulnerability**. The standard is helping us identify and meet the evolving needs of vulnerable customers, address gaps and build services that work well for everyone across all our channels. Our enhanced understanding influenced the implementation of a range of activities to tackle key accessibility barriers.



Inclusive communication channels



► What we heard

The Consumer Vulnerability Panel challenged us to develop a more segmented and intersectional understanding of communication needs and test new approaches aimed at hard-to-reach groups. We shared best practice with SSEN and engaged with vulnerability experts who represent our largest PSR gaps.

Top five PSR gaps	Expert input	Engagement barriers	What we heard
Pensionable Age Gap: 11%		Trust and digital exclusion	Over 65s are a target for scammers, 73% by phone, making them wary of speaking to unknown companies. 55% use a smartphone (vs. 88% general population) and 77% use the internet at home (vs. 92%).
Dialysis Gap: 8%		Trust and time	Dialysis patients have hospital treatment up to three times a week and, for 91%, nurses and doctors are the most trusted source of information and support.
Blind Gap: 8%		Technology	Visually impaired people prefer to access information via internet radio (95% vs. 88% general population), smart speakers (30% vs. 11%) and podcasts (47% vs. 33%).
Physical impairment Gap: 8%		Transport	33% of people living with disabilities have no access to public or other transport to access support services.
Hearing impairment Gap: 6%		Language	95% of BSL users prefer to receive information in their first language, but most support services use English.

Overcoming language barriers

We collaborated with the Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD) to reach 144 BSL users with in-person home visits and nine cost-of-living, energy efficiency and power cut preparation **workshops at local Deaf Societies**. The first phase of **data sharing** with RAD led to 80 PSR registrations. We created a series of **BSL videos** raising awareness of the PSR and the new PSR UK website, and shared these with all DNOs, for the benefit of all deaf customers.

We used census data to identify the **top ten languages** spoken in the North West and ensured our **updated customer support literature is available in all these languages** via a print on demand portal.

Following best practice sharing with Northern Ireland Electricity we became the **first DNO to adopt the just a minute card (JAM)**, which allows people with a hidden disability to tell others that they need extra time and understanding. 100% of our colleagues are trained to recognise JAM where customers use a card or app to share a message e.g. "I have autism".

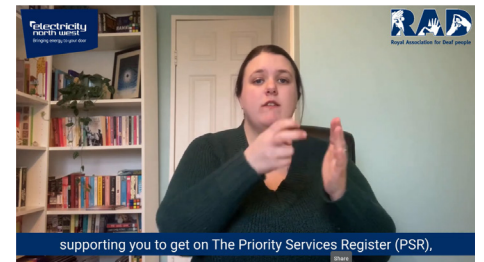


Overcoming digital exclusion barriers

We collaborated with Age UK to integrate PSR signposting, energy efficiency and income maximisation advice into 1,375 assessments carried out by their team. 1,140 elderly people needing hospital aftercare and home help received in-depth support. We provided thermal mugs, heated blankets, oil-filled radiators and battery-operated radios and light bulbs to these PSR members. Age UK also accessed our corporate Charis shopping account to give **emergency fuel vouchers** to 90.

Overcoming trust and time barriers

We collaborated with Kidney Care UK to support 8,943 North West patients who have a choice between home dialysis or renal units. Around 6% of patients have dialysis at home (vs. a 20% NHS target), with many returning to renal units this year because they cannot afford their energy costs. 18 advocacy officers engaged with 41,500 patients to deliver comprehensive psychosocial and financial support that enabled 10% to be treated at home. Our engagement helped provide **£57,026 in financial and hardship grants** to 115 patients (£460pp) and led to **2,900 PSR registrations**.



An attendee at the Bolton Deaf Society said:

"As a disabled deaf Asian woman I don't usually get access to the same services as hearing or able-bodied people. My smart meter monitor used to cause me anxiety but since the (BSL) workshop I know how to use it and have already saved £90."

Overcoming technology and transport barriers

We began a new partnership with Vocala, a leading digital agency which specialises in creating interactive experiences for smart speakers and voice-enabled devices. **Together we developed a new Amazon Alexa skill** to take advantage of the growth in smart speaker usage, especially among visually impaired customers, and the reach of Amazon. The skill went live in early 2023. In response to the command "Alexa, enable Electricity North West", Alexa provides PSR information and asks the customer if they would like 1) to register by automatically sharing their contact data and/or 2) receive future alerts and notifications. The customer can accept permissions through voice or via the Alexa app. During our pilot we advertised the service on social media and via our vulnerability partners.

Phase two will assess usability and take-up in response to wider promotion and explore other innovative applications. These include push notifications on planned power cuts, adverse weather and compensation payments. We are also engaging with care homes and organisations who support vulnerable customers to understand how our skill can help them stay prepared.

We produced several **podcasts** in partnership with **Roch Valley Radio** as part of their 'Community Corner' show. The first episode in conjunction with Age UK (Lancashire) gives advice for the elderly to prepare for the winter. In the second episode, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service talks about safety in the home and the third raises awareness of the support we provide to our PSR customers. So far, the podcasts have reached 9,500 people (165,780 listener minutes).



► Stakeholder impact

Our innovative approaches increased access to PSR services among underrepresented groups influencing:

- ✔ 90.3% PSR customer satisfaction
- ✔ £73,000 direct financial savings to customers via partners giving trusted in-depth advice. Following support 60% said they felt less stressed and 55% said their risk of financial hardship had reduced
- ✔ 164,950 new PSR members in 2022/23, reducing the proportion of eligible customers not registered to 27%. The largest membership gains were from the top-five underrepresented groups
- ✔ PSR membership delivers societal benefits including minimising distress during power cuts, reducing the need for primary healthcare services and changing energy efficiency behaviour.
- ✔ Registering new PSR members delivered a social value of £28 in excess of every £1 spent over 12 months.

A hyper-local and agile approach to overcoming barriers



► Strategic context

Fuel poverty occurs when a household cannot afford to adequately heat their home or meet basic energy requirements. These households are often in debt and at risk of living in cold homes, which can have significant health consequences. A range of short and long-term interventions are required to optimise incomes, reduce fuel prices, improve housing insulation and energy efficiency.

The cost of living crisis affects all of us, but it affects the fuel poor disproportionately. Due to their circumstances, they do not automatically have the ability to improve their situation. Our Consumer Vulnerability Panel and wider stakeholders have driven our ambition to reach 250,000 households in, or at risk of being in, fuel poverty and provide in-depth support to 125,000 by 2028. Our challenge was how to ramp up access to our support matrix (see Part One, page six).

► What we did

Our insights showed that early interventions deliver better outcomes for customers. We collaborated with strategic partner Citizens Advice Manchester (CAM) to implement an **innovative 'hyper local' strategy, to increase the visibility of our support and reach people when they need help.**

We launched a **new mobile advice centre (MAC)** to take specialist energy advisors to areas with the greatest prevalence of fuel poverty in our region. Advisors engaged with customers and issued literature available in the ten most common languages spoken in the North West. We collaborated with housing associations to offer energy, legal and debt advice to their tenants, who could be more open with us than their landlords. We **sent advisors to over 50 locations requested by customers**, including barbers, bingo halls, food banks, healthcare venues, markets, schools and supermarkets. **3,120 customers accessed support services at these venues.** 1,200 people who were unable to travel or stop at the MAC, booked appointments for a **new debt video advice service.** This flexible approach made it easier for advisors to help customers fill in documentation and give practical solutions to help them find a way forward.

We launched a **new listening ear service.** From our surveys, we saw that people who feel overwhelmed at the point of accessing advice, are 60% less likely to act on what they hear. In response we **trained 97 advisors in empathetic listening**, so they could ask how people were feeling about their situation. Mental health support was given in-house and via specialist referrals. This approach helped our advisors to build trust in our service.

This year we mirrored CAM's compassionate approach with our own workforce. We delivered 16,000 hours of specialist empathy training focused on developing our colleagues' ability to understand the feelings of customers and see situations from their point of view. 100% of colleagues, contractors and delivery partners completed a new **'Switched on to Vulnerability' e-module**, which was enhanced with in-person training and call coaching delivered by our partners.

Our new Mobile Advice Centre



► What we heard

Our strategic partners and Utilities Together consortium helped us understand the barriers we would face in engaging customers 'just about managing', fuel poor and in-crisis groups:

- Mental health needs are increasing due to the pandemic and the rising cost-of-living
- While the stigma of discussing energy bills decreases when more people are struggling, pride still prevents some people from asking for help – especially in some public environments
- For the first time ever, more than 50% of fuel poor customers are in a negative budget and are falling into debt. Debt is the hardest thing for people to talk about in public
- People hope they will find a way out of their situation and/or do not want to be prioritised for support if others then lose out, delaying and increasing the help they need later.

► Stakeholder impact

Our hyper-local strategy, delivered with the help of our trusted partners, enabled:

- ✔ 2,154 customers to avoid disconnection, meeting their basic physical and safety needs
- ✔ 65% of customers needing support for the first-time accessed debt support services and/or financial grants
- ✔ A reduction in the need for NHS mental health referrals, a cost saving of around £55 per person supported
- ✔ A 94% empathy rating, given by 24,246 customers rating our call advisors following an interaction.

Fqsa (a customer) spoke to us in the MAC after a school parents evening and said:

"I'm in arrears with my energy bill and can't deal with it going up any more. Thank you for the emergency fuel voucher, and for contacting my supplier, it helped me to turn the heating back on. The new heating system installed from LEAP will change my life. I know there are people worse off than me, but you've made me realise there is support out there for me."

Maximising support where and when it is needed most



► Strategic context

The average fuel poverty gap for England in 2022 (the reduction in fuel costs needed for a household to avoid fuel poverty) increased to £338, from £254 in 2021. Our challenge was to find a way to decrease this gap by growing the value of financial benefits delivered to every household supported.

► What we heard

Last year the SECV Panel was keen to ensure that DNOs accurately calculate direct cost savings for customers who take action as a result of the help they receive.

► What we did

In response to Panel feedback, we led several workshops and bilateral meetings with other DNOs which culminated in **DNO alignment to clear and consistent fuel poverty reporting metrics.**

Our approach to fuel poverty, developed over the ED1 period, was integrated into this year's support matrix (See Part One, page six). This was done to focus our efforts and funding towards a structured and stakeholder-shaped programme that addressed customer needs at different levels.

This year we continued to build the capacity of our six key fuel poverty partners and wider referral network of 148 organisations. Our strategic partner CAM targeted Manchester, which has a relatively high prevalence of fuel poverty, and which accounted for 68% of our total investment (£364,000) and 75% of the services delivered. CAFs, Cosy Homes, Groundwork, Homewise and Marches Energy contributed the remaining 25% across Cumbria and Lancashire.

Our strategic approach enables scalability as all six partners can refer to one another via a digital system called ReferNet. We also used ReferNet to refer customers following conversations with colleagues in their everyday interactions. Our partners share and adopt best practice which we facilitate through 'Spotlight Sessions' during ongoing stakeholder advisory panels. This has enabled partners to identify and fill gaps in their service provision and for us to spot opportunities to expand the breadth of services delivered.

Maximising support where and when it is needed most (cont.)



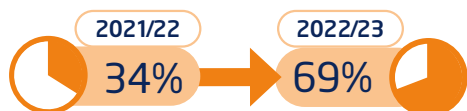
Areas of focus for 2022/23 included

- ✔ Scaling-up income maximisation to fill the void left by tariff switching (value £250pp)
- ✔ Introducing social broadband tariffs to our service portfolio (value £250pp)
- ✔ Scaling-up advice on ECO grant funding for replacement of boilers (value £1,342pp)
- ✔ Signposting smart meters to help customers budget more effectively and avoid missing out on future opportunities to earn payments for flexibility (value £34).

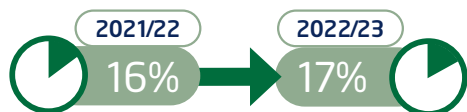
Working with our partners this year we provided information and advice to 17,275 at risk/in fuel poverty households and **in-depth bespoke help to 12,362 households.**

Proportion of households receiving in-depth (and in-scope) support, by output

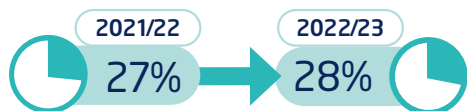
Income maximisation



Energy efficiency installations



Behavioural change



The following metrics were agreed with other DNOs to ensure consistency and comparability. They report **programme level benefits from in-depth fuel poverty** services delivered during 2022/23:

Metric (reported by all DNOs)	2021/22 comparison	2022/23 outcome
Customers supported	10,087	12,362
Customer financial benefits	£1.07m	£2.32m
Social return on investment in excess of every £1 spent	£2.50	£9.33
SROI term modelled	12 months	

We use complementary **volume and value metrics** to understand the benefit of in-depth fuel poverty services over a 12-month period as follows:

Metric (additional to core DNO set)	2021/22 comparison	2022/23 outcome
Average annual financial benefit per customer	£106	£187
Societal benefits	£0.20m	£0.52m
Carbon benefits	£0.01m	£0.01m
Net value	£0.91m	£2.56m

Our leading indicators (see Part One, page ten) extend to efficiency, quality and trust:

- ✔ Our cost to deliver in-depth support was £21.39 per customer, improving from £32.49 last year
- ✔ 60% said they felt less stressed, depressed or anxious as a result of receiving advice
- ✔ 87% would recommend the service to anyone in the same situation as them.

Maya (a customer) spoke to Marches Energy at a grocery club and said:

"Despite my initial reservations, the heated throw you provided is economical and the warmth and comfort it provides means there is no need to put the heating on overnight. You have saved me about £250 already which means I can afford to eat and still use my electric breathing machine."

► What we will do next

Our collaboration with DNOs revealed a common challenge around the complexity of continuing to find and support hard-to-reach customers. In response we are **piloting a new data source** which identifies customers who have applied for high-cost, short-term loans to pay their bills, with a view to proactively contacting and supporting these customers.

Piloting 'water and energy in the home'



► Strategic context

In 2020/21 we founded Utilities Together, a coalition of North West energy and water utilities to share best practice, co-fund initiatives and give consistent messaging to customers. These partnerships, along with cross-utility data sharing, allow us to deliver coordinated and comprehensive support to vulnerable customers.

► What we heard

We updated our Citizens Jury Panel of 40 customers on our collaboration programme. They expressed a desire to see us expand our collaboration with regional utilities, especially on new ideas, to help provide joined-up, efficient and cost-effective services to consumers in vulnerable circumstances.

► What we did

We collaborated on six initiatives with Utilities Together members this year and created a new pan-northern approach by sharing best practice with Infrastructure North, thereby bringing NPG and Northumbrian Water into the fold. One of our joint ventures is a new 'water and energy in the home' advice service which involves up to two visits to a customer's home (triage and installation).



Water

A review of water consumption, fixtures and fittings in the home to:

- ✔ Give tailored water-saving advice
- ✔ Signpost alternative water tariffs
- ✔ Install water-saving devices* free-of-charge
- ✔ Fix minor leaks free-of-charge.

*Devices include: showerhead regulators, four-minute shower timers, twin tap inserts, save-a-flush cistern displacement devices, leaky loo strips, outside tap guards and flow regulators.



Energy

Bringing energy to your door

A review of energy consumption, behaviours and devices in the home to:

- ✔ Give tailored energy-saving advice
- ✔ Install efficiency measures* free-of-charge
- ✔ Signpost income maximisation benefits
- ✔ Register customers to the PSR.

*Measures include: LED bulbs, thermostats, radiator valves, insulation, draught-proofing and referrals for boiler replacement.

150 customers are taking part in our pilot which targets fuel poor areas across the North West.

► Stakeholder impact

- ✔ We anticipate the pilot service will deliver leakage repairs to 30 households. We are conducting a follow-up survey with customers to understand the quality of services, action taken, and savings made
- ✔ We cautiously estimate direct bill savings of £426 per household, alongside carbon reduction and wellbeing benefits, which deliver a social value of £19 in excess of every £1 spent over 12 months.

Our 2022/23 Engagement in Action



Karen Hunter, Partnership and Community Manager, raising awareness of our customer support services, through regular attendance at cost-of-living drop-in forums hosted by Bolton Council.



We collaborated with Citizens Advice Manchester to scale-up support to fuel poor customers. Advisors used our new mobile advice centre to visit over 50 locations requested by customers, including community halls (pictured above), bingo halls, food banks, healthcare venues markets, schools and supermarkets.

Economic Insight

James Harvey, Director at Economic Insight, said:

“

Following a peer review of Electricity North West's SROI calculations, we are confident that the benefit values presented in its 2022/23 SECV submission are a reliable estimate of the social value of each case study and have been developed in accordance with best practice and the common fuel poverty reporting approach. ”



Jill Hendry, Welfare Innovation Manager, and Sam Loukes, Vulnerability Inclusion Manager, sharing a stand with UKPN colleagues at the UKPN Annual Conference in January 2023.



We signposted cost-of-living support available from our partners, including United Utilities and Cadent Gas, on 700,000 prescription bags, targeting pharmacies in the top ten areas of fuel poverty.



Supporting those living with CKD

Across the North West, 415,000 people have kidney disease. Our new partnership with Kidney Care UK saw specialists raise awareness of the PSR and provides bespoke training to our colleagues which will help provide a more specialist response and service.



Simon Fell MP, Barrow and Furness, said:

“

Much of my constituency is rural and is prone to power cuts during extreme weather. I'm very glad, that following research, and the relaunching of the PSR as the Extra Care Register, reach to vulnerable customers has increased. It means that vulnerable people have access to a dedicated team, proactive communication, money saving advice, and a password scheme if a home visit is needed. ”



We worked with NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care to deliver 30,000 thermometer cards. Advice on keeping warm and how to access extra care during a power cut were provided via Salford Council's winter packs, social services visits, hospitals visitors and doctors' surgeries.



This year our partnership with broadcasters RochValley Radio expanded to launch a new podcast series. Each episode tackles a different cost-of-living theme and informs customers how they can access the financial benefits our charity partners provide.



Electricity North West joined forces with Kidney Care UK this year to help provide additional support for customers in a new partnership.

Electricity North West

Borron Street
Portwood
Stockport
SK1 2JD

0800 195 41 41

www.enwl.co.uk

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Electricity North West Limited
Registered number 02366949