



NORTHERN
POWERGRID

Supporting our vulnerable customers

Part 3

Stakeholder Engagement
and Consumer Vulnerability
Incentive 2020/21

Welcome

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This is **Part 3** of our submission to Ofgem's Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) Incentive for the regulatory year 2020/21. Our SECV submission comprises three parts:

Part 1

An overview of our strategies and approach to ensuring customer and stakeholder voice is driving change and improvement now and in the future.

Part 2

Details and examples of how engagement is leading to measurable improvements for our customers and stakeholders.

Part 3

Setting out our consumer vulnerability strategy, partnerships and fuel poverty programmes, and how we are ensuring that Nobody is left behind.

Our regional structure enables our teams to best serve the local needs of our customers



8m⁺

customers

42,300

miles of underground
distribution lines

2,688

colleagues

17,400

miles of overhead
distribution lines

Introduction

Since 2015, we have developed and delivered a comprehensive and positively received programme of enhanced services for vulnerable customers. These have been fully embedded in our business and support customers daily with their needs. We have a strong engagement plan and governance in place which helps us to ensure that customers are being supported, are satisfied with the services provided and identify areas for improvement. As a result we are seeing a year-on-year improvement in meeting vulnerable customer service targets across the board. However, over the last 12 months we have seen the impact of the COVID pandemic, the challenges that have emerged and the serious impact on vulnerability in our region. This situation has clearly shaped our response this past year and is reflected across our submission.

Building on the strong core services already in place, the work involved in transitioning to a new business plan, and the urgency required in our response to the pandemic, means we have acted swiftly to adapt our services needed to deliver a comprehensive, impactful response for our customers. As the panel would expect, we have also invested in our understanding of vulnerability and how it is changing regionally and locally within different communities. We will continue to seek knowledge moving forward, but I am confident that our core approach remains strong and has helped us meet the last 12 months' challenges.

This confidence is supported by our campaigns' success, recommissioning Energy Heroes, increasing efficiency of Powergrid Care, and the introduction of telephone debt advice services that mean we have a robust fuel poverty approach, having extended reach and impact significantly.

Our enduring local partnerships have helped to expand our reach further and have been essential in our ability to be responsive; identifying need and delivering tailored support to those most in need during the pandemic. We passionately believe that in our day-to-day work and in planning for the future, it is essential that we achieve a just transition that is inclusive of all the communities we serve. This essential part of our submission contains examples of where we have striven to achieve this in our day-to-day services and our strategic planning - with a particular focus on examples that have delivered meaningful change for vulnerable customers.

Patrick Erwin

Patrick Erwin
Policy and Markets Director – Northern Powergrid



2020/21 highlights

91.4%

vulnerable customer satisfaction

106,904

customers reached with energy efficiency campaign

£13.7m+

estimated financial benefit from fuel poverty programmes

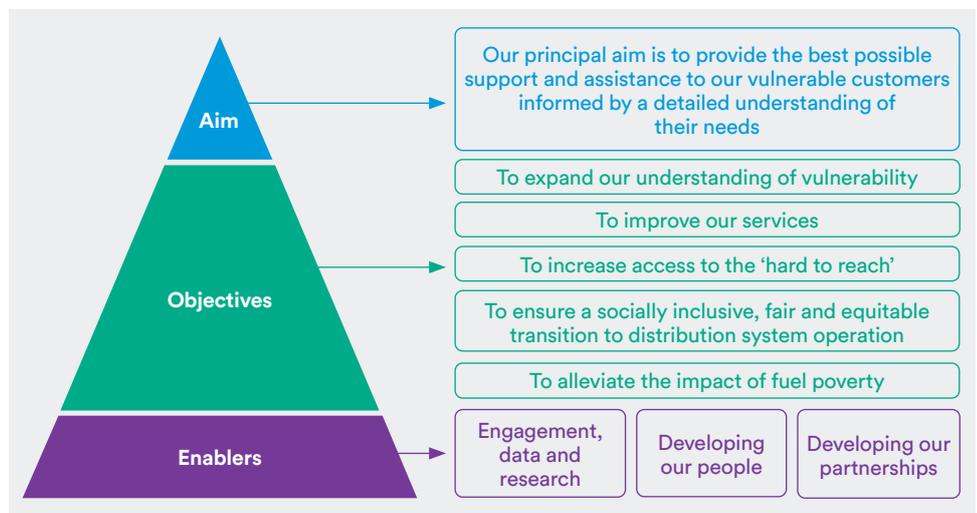
129,423

PSM records updated through data cleanse activities (up 15% on last year)

Nobody left behind
framework in action

Our embedded strategy

Our Consumer Vulnerability strategy has evolved since 2013 as we have further understood customer needs and developed, tested and embedded a comprehensive service package. Whilst we will be publishing our new long-term strategy for the next business planning period in July 2021 it is important that our current strategy (opposite) reflects our priorities. In consultation with our Social Issues Expert Group we have added a new objective explicitly highlighting our support for customers experiencing fuel poverty. Our strategic focus this year has been communicating and testing our supporting approaches for fuel poverty and partnerships and developing an initial approach to nobody left behind, for consultation.



2020/21 - activity summary

Embedded

- ✓ Vulnerable customer satisfaction survey
- ✓ Social Issues Expert Group
- ✓ Proactive communication targets
- ✓ Consumer Vulnerability Matrix
- ✓ Fully automated data cleanse process
- ✓ Community Partnering Fund
- ✓ Inclusivity and representation approach
- ✓ Powergrid Care
- ✓ Energy Heroes
- ✓ Digital partner 'Force for good' resources providing access to support tools and advice

Scaled up

- ✓ Granularity of energy efficiency and fuel poverty data
- ✓ Suitcase generators
- ✓ Silent Power vehicles
- ✓ Third sector partnerships
- ✓ Positive social impact initiatives delivered through investment programmes (Part 2)
- ✓ Digital energy efficiency campaigns
- ✓ PSM recruitment campaigns
- ✓ Localised and personalised support or vulnerable customers
- ✓ Care leavers support

New

- ✓ Future Fairness Panel
- ✓ Fuel poverty research - barriers and overcoming them
- ✓ Priority Service Membership launched; new resources and website
- ✓ Nobody left behind approach
- ✓ Barriers to future energy markets research
- ✓ Money and Pensions Advice Service
- ✓ Working with the Energy Savings Trust on the use of an energy efficiency app

Expanding our understanding of vulnerability

We define vulnerable customers as:

1. Customers who are less able to represent themselves or their interests in the energy market (all vulnerable customers).
2. Customers who need extra support due to loss or interruption to their power (Powergrid Care – Priority Service Membership (PSM) customers).
3. Customers experiencing vulnerabilities which we have a legitimate role

in addressing, reducing, and supporting (see our wider Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy).

Understanding the needs of our vulnerable customers and keeping up with the complex world and issues that can impact them is an ongoing process. In addition to a comprehensive engagement programme with customers themselves we have a raft of methods for ensuring we have the most up to date insight to ensure a relevant and comprehensive response.

	2020/21 examples	Insight	Our response
Data, expert research and benchmarking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Experian data on efficiency ratings and fuel poverty at neighbourhood level • Desk research into benchmarking and best practice around Nobody left behind • 129,423 PSM customer records cleansed through embedded process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer understanding of where to target fuel poverty campaign advice at neighbourhood level • United Nations 'Nobody left behind' framework works well in its adapted form, and wider best practice has moved on from 'hard to reach' towards 'seldom heard' and 'nobody left behind' language and approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted fuel poverty campaign advice outperforms campaign targets • 'Nobody left behind' approach based on latest best practice and thinking • Robust PSM data maintained
Expert panels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Issues Expert Group (SIEG) now in 8th year • New Future Fairness Panel established 	Future Fairness Panel challenged us to translate and begin implementation of the 'Nobody left behind' framework into a practical, measurable model across the business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnered with NEA to look at practical application of the 'Nobody left behind' model within the business
Partnership insight and horizon scanning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 NEW partnerships awarded in 2020 through Community Partnering Fund • Continual dialogue to understand changing needs during the COVID pandemic • Ongoing dialogue with third-sector delivery partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All local partners were seeing additional acute needs from the people they supported with an emphasis on mental wellbeing, increasing financial pressures and isolation as a result of the COVID pandemic • Our third-sector partners were all faced with challenges to their delivery models during COVID. Needing to move from face to face support to telephone and digital alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided £50,000 additional funding to support community partners to address COVID impacts, and introduced flexibility to delivery deadlines and models recognising adaption was causing significant challenge • Development and roll out of MIND training for contact centre colleagues as a priority
In-depth customer research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to drive behaviour changes in PSM services through research with 28 vulnerable customers • Fuel poverty research - in-depth interviews with 30 customers experiencing fuel poverty and third-sector partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers are put off by the term 'register' within priority service communications – it is a barrier to registration • Dependent on circumstances, and the duration or depth of fuel poverty, an individual is experiencing their needs will differ significantly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapted all priority service communications to refer to membership rather than the register and refreshed the website • Fuel poverty guiding principles informed by customer feedback and expert input from third-sector partners
Customer satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID tracking research (see below) • 1,200 customers surveyed annually across service lines 	Awareness of Priority Service Membership (PSM) and the services available has improved overall but feedback regarding the receipt of welcome packs is still too low; due to the packs often being digital and therefore the language of 'pack' not being recognised	Reviewed welcome communications for PSM and adapted research questions to reference welcome information
External intelligence and Government policy tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Prime Minister's 10-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, giving a high-level plan for decarbonising energy in the 2020s • The Energy White Paper, giving a detailed strategy of how to decarbonise energy, setting out actions that will be taken in the 2020s 	While not all of these policies are consequential to the development of our activities to help fuel poor and vulnerable households in RIIO-ED2, there are three that could have a clear impact: 'Greener Buildings', 'Driving the Growth of Low Carbon Hydrogen' and 'Accelerating the Shift to Zero Emission Vehicles'	Shaping our RIIO-ED2 plans e.g. engaging with vulnerable households specifically on Heat Pumps and EVs, and intention to prioritise innovation projects that will look to ensure that no customer is left behind in the transition, particularly with respect to heating, new innovative tariffs and transport

A Holistic approach to the pandemic

The COVID pandemic has left people more aware than ever of their growing reliance on the energy system, and in some cases, has left vulnerable people more isolated than before. In response, stakeholders asked us to enhance our customer service to meet the changing needs associated with the pandemic.

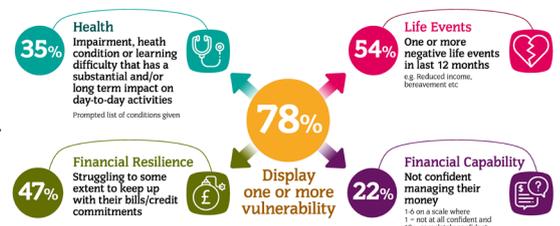
In addition to adapting our day-to-day delivery to a more proactive face to face and localised model we have significantly expanded our energy efficiency advice services and communications to address increased financial pressures. We partnered with MIND to fast track our mental health training to front-line

staff and promote the support they provide through our customer communications.

Recognising the increased pressure on our partners services we have supported them through sharing of data, additional training (covered in our sustainable partnership) and an **additional £50,000 funding** to help them to adapt their services to be COVID safe and accessible. In some cases this has seen a considerable increase in customers supported. We have also focussed our new partnerships on particularly vulnerable groups e.g. **Barnardo's and Age UK** supporting care leavers and elderly who may be most susceptible to isolation.

Most customers display some form of actual or potential vulnerability

Proportion of UK adults displaying each driver of vulnerability - Financial Conduct Authority.



Priority Services Membership and Campaigns

Our Priority Service Membership (PSM) and registrations are tracked and analysed throughout the year to inform the focus of our recruitment efforts, in line with the recruitment strategy we have reported for the last two years. The strategy focuses on those customers most at risk or currently under-represented on the register.

Whilst we are seeing a year-on-year decline in the overall number of registrations - we believe this is due to improved quality of data - and whilst overall the figure has decreased the share over those registered through our activities rather than supplier data sharing is increasing, indicating that our targeted recruitment and partnership approach is working.

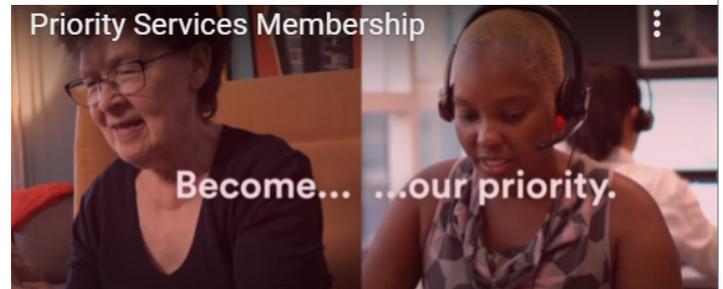
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Total new PSM registrations	191,376	222,459	160,191	127,076
Direct registrations through NPg	7,701	7,166	11,178	9,827
Proportion that were direct	4.0%	3.2%	7.0%	7.7%

In 2019/20 our focus was on recruitment of people with health and mental health campaigns, and those experiencing isolation through our good neighbours campaign.

Need type	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	Proportion of eligible customers recruited				
Medically dependent	17.6%	32.0%	50.8%	60.6%	64.5%
Mental health	24.9%	39.9%	61.5%	76.4%	83.7%

Following the research into the challenges and barriers to engaging with the Priority Service Register this year we have launched our new and improved Priority Service Membership. The campaign and resources were developed using the insights gained through our extensive vulnerable customer engagement.

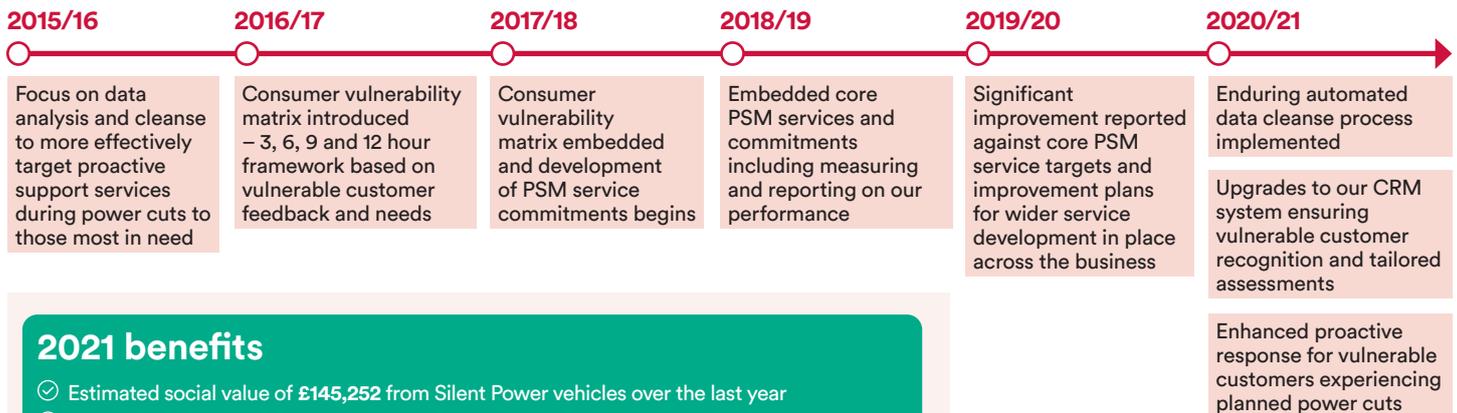
We continue to target our recruitment at those customers most at risk in a power cut. Our analysis has shown that we still have vulnerable categories that are under-represented, so this year our campaign has included specific targeting for customers that speak English as a second language. We have had excellent engagement, with over **40,000** views of our recruitment video.



Outcomes

- ✔ **4,844,962** digital impressions.
- ✔ Google Ad click throughs – **11,441 +47%** improvement on 2019/20.
- ✔ Avg cost per click **£0.13** compared to £0.23 2019/20.
- ✔ Video views – **144,575** view rate **43% +29%** on 2019/20.

Developing our services for vulnerable customers



2021 benefits

- ✔ Estimated social value of **£145,252** from Silent Power vehicles over the last year
- ✔ **91.4%** overall satisfaction with PSM services
- ✔ **153.6%** increase in customers supported by a personalised PSM service during a power cut
- ✔ **88.3%** of PSM customers restored **within 6 hours**

Strong performance against stretching commitments and service targets

Our core PSM services are embedded and reported to our Executive team through monthly governance processes. Since embedding, this is our third consecutive year of reporting where we have seen an improvement in our performance. It is difficult to compare actual like-for-like performance this year around planned power cut services as they severely reduced in frequency due to the pandemic, which is reflected in the proactive call figures below, however performance remains steady in terms of comparability.

We continue to improve our services with a focus this year around getting the power back on quickly which remains the number one priority for all customers, particularly those experiencing any form of vulnerability, and increasing our proactive communications through greater use of digital channels. We also test potential service improvements, **200+ customers** responded to our defibrillator quick poll and this is now being considered as part of our RIIO-ED2 business plan.

We measure vulnerable customer satisfaction and gather feedback on our service through an independent survey which has been running since 2013. In January 2021 we completed the 11th phase of quantitative tracking research through **1,200 vulnerable customer** telephone interviews.

Service satisfaction and feedback

91.4%

overall satisfaction with PSM services

32%

the most common way respondents found out about the PSM was via our website - an increase from the previous phase (+10%)

92%

satisfaction with the reason given for the planned power cut, an increase from the previous phase (+2%)

When asked about additional assistance they may need the priorities remain:

- ✔ Restoring the power as quickly as possible.
- ✔ Regular updates and general information.
- ✔ Information on when the power will be restored.

Core PSM service performance

Metric	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Improvement
Total outbound PSM proactive contacts	405,908	1,055,174	1,871,449	77.4%
Total outbound PSM proactive calls	25,600	43,446	39,874	-8.2%*
Percentage of PSM customers contacted proactively - planned power cuts	93.9%	93.9%	96.8%	3.0%
Percentage of PSM customers contacted proactively - HV faults over 3 hours	5.8%	58.0%	76.3%	31.5%
Percentage of PSM customers restored within 6 hours LV fault	86.3%	87.0%	88.3%	1.5%
Percentage of PSM customers restored within 9 hours	98.1%	98.0%	98.0%	0.0%
Combined PSM overall satisfaction	90.6%	89.7%	91.6%	2.1%
Customers supported by a personalised PSM service during a power cut	1,280	677	1,717	153.6%

*Drop due to reduction in planned power cuts as a result of COVID pandemic

Delivering and testing our services

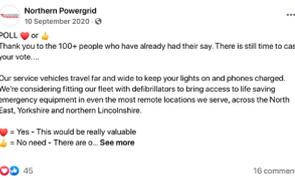
Suitcase generators

Since roll out, our suitcase generators have been deployed to support our vulnerable customers through our Regional teams, tailoring support as and when needed. They have been deployed 20 times in the West Yorkshire region as part of our trial and are now being tracked throughout 2021 across our region. Some examples of deployment include:

- In November 2020, a vulnerable customer experienced a power cut. Following a proactive call from our Priority Service team we identified a customer who was reliant on a hoist to support her movement around the home and needed extra support. As the power cut was going to exceed the level of time that the customer was able to cope, we arranged for a suitcase generator to be fitted. The customers' daughter contacted us to express her thanks for us going the extra mile.
- During the extreme weather in February one of our priority service customers was concerned about a power cut as she suffered problems with her back, to ease the pain and to stop it from ceasing the customer required heat pads, as the interruption was going to exceed three hours (which would have been manageable for the customer) we provided a suitcase generator for the duration of the interruption.

Outcomes

- ✓ Customers can remain in their homes during a power cut.
- ✓ Minimised disruption and anxiety for vulnerable customers.



Scaled up

Silent Power

Scaled up

In 2020 we reported on the introduction of our first three Silent Power vans as a pilot. After successful trials, the vans were released for regular use by our Field Operations colleagues and are now an embedded part of our power cut response for vulnerable customers and communities.

The Silent Power vans are deployed as mobile, clean generators and are able to power up to three homes, a small business or a community centre in the event of a power cut for 24 hours. They replace cumbersome, noisy and polluting diesel generators and help to reduce carbon emissions and reduce air and sound pollution.

Outcomes

- ✓ Silent Power vans deployed **130** times across 2020/21.
- ✓ Diesel fuel savings from all deployments are estimated at **4,940** litres, with an emissions saving of **13,239kg** of CO₂.
- ✓ Estimated social value of **£145,252** over the last year.

Nobody left behind - Hard to reach

We have set out in Part 1 our new 'Nobody left behind' framework which has been developed following extensive research, best practice benchmarking and engagement. In Part 1 we also set out how we are defining, identifying and engaging hard to reach, seldom heard groups and those at risk of being left behind. Throughout Parts 2 and 3 you can see multiple examples of how we are identifying, supporting and delivering benefits for the hard to reach in the here and now, from SMEs and Community Energy, through to our third-sector partnerships supporting vulnerable individuals and communities. In this section we focus on the 'Enact' aspect of our strategy.



Following the development of our social inclusion model and seven point plan this year, we commissioned a piece of independent research with vulnerable customers to test our thinking and the accessibility of the plan itself.

The research objectives were to:

- Understand customer engagement triggers and barriers to the social inclusivity model.
- Explore the most effective ways to communicate future changes to customers, in a way that resonates with their priorities and values.
- Engage with those more vulnerable customers who are in danger of being negatively impacted financially or otherwise.

This qualitative first stage research consisted of two online workshops with vulnerable customers to discuss and understand key barriers to the social inclusion model in depth and explore ways to overcome these. We now have a better understanding of customers' environmental attitudes and behaviours as well as the benefits which resonate.

Customers also fed back on the model and communication itself and we are currently working on creating a refined customer-centric version of the 7-point plan which will then be tested through in-depth interviews with vulnerable customers.

This insight not only helps us to communicate our approach more clearly to customers, but helps to inform the design of our future engagement and services making them resonate with customers.

Benefits of decarbonisation and the social inclusivity model that appealed to customers



We have been working with the Energy Saving Trust to offer two of the innovative service tools they have developed to support our customers.

Energy Efficiency Advice Tool - Tailored and memorable energy advice for smart meter installations

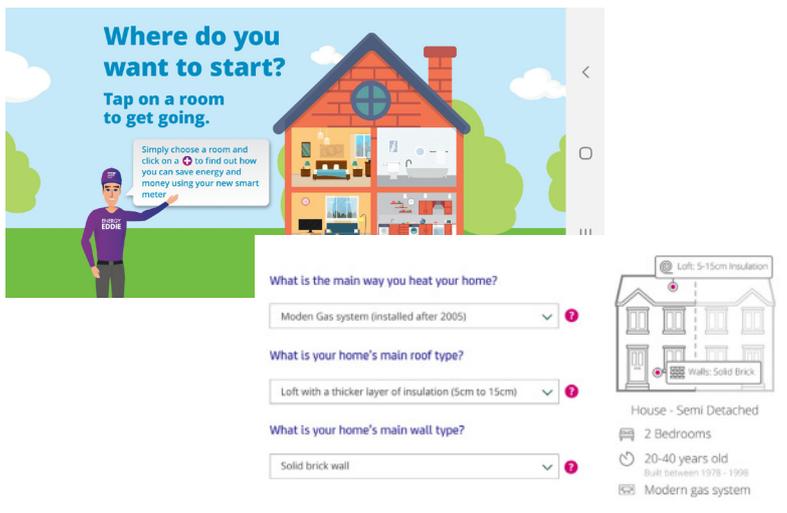
The provision of tailored energy efficiency guidance during the smart meter installation process is a critical requirement of the Smart Meter Installation Code of Practice (SMICoP). This unique energy advice mobile app is designed to assist smart meter installers and energy suppliers with providing tailored energy saving advice at the point of meter installation. The app helps engage customers with memorable energy saving advice both during and after their smart meter installation.

Home Energy Efficiency Tool - Interactive energy advice

The tool provides customers with a tailored end-to-end experience, outlining the best long-term cost or carbon savings and home improvements based on the characteristics of their own home. It works by asking a few questions about a customer's home. It then uses extensive reference data to fill in the gaps and model all possible combinations. The customer receives a tailored action plan identifying the most cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable investment solutions.

Expected benefits

- ✓ Ensuring consistency and quality control across our workforce.
- ✓ Eliminating the requirement for in-depth engineer training.
- ✓ Reducing the time allocated to the installation process.
- ✓ Aiding customer recall through the provision of memorable and impactful advice.
- ✓ Optimum energy saving solutions to suit the customers' available budget.
- ✓ Potential monthly and annual customer bill savings.
- ✓ Potential carbon savings and environmental impact from the customers' energy use.
- ✓ Details the impact on EPC rating and how the customer can improve it.



In light of the Prime Minister's 10-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, the Energy White Paper and Ofgem's RIIO-ED2 regulatory framework, we asked our expert partners at National Energy Action to assess the current political landscape and suggest the practical considerations we will need to make in our medium (2023 - 28) and longer-term plans. We are using their report to inform our RIIO-ED2 business plan, and where possible beginning to action them or put in place the building blocks for delivery now.

Recommendations

- Ensure that there are sufficient plans to refer households into the fuel poverty schemes that will exist during RIIO-ED2.
- Ensure a fair and equitable process for providing upgraded connections for households that wish to install a heat pump.
- Ensure fair DSO markets by working to help vulnerable households compete in those markets.
- Ensure energy advice is ready for a potentially significant market change.
- Act on the recommendations of the Energy Data Taskforce, setting out how we will maximise the value of our data on vulnerability, and make this data more transparent.
- Set out an intention to prioritise innovation projects that will look to ensure that no customer is left behind in the transition, particularly with respect to heating, new innovative tariffs and transport.
- Ensure that, within the vulnerability strategy, there is a plan to promote energy efficiency, including referrals onto fuel poor schemes, in areas of network constraint.
- Standardisation of DSO markets should consider how to make them inclusive, including making them attractive for households in vulnerable situations.
- Set out a plan to engage with vulnerable households specifically on Heat Pumps and EVs.
- Commit to working towards fair and equitable energy system governance.

Response

- ✓ With the inclusion of the Money Advice Service referral scheme and increased reach of our fuel poverty initiatives and campaigns we feel we have a robust model in place that will be responsive to changing needs.
- ✓ We have ramped up our education approach to improve customers' understanding of new and future markets and services and to increase accessibility.
- ✓ Our RIIO-ED2 plans are incorporating this feedback and will reflect our commitment to, and practical steps towards, a 'Just Transition' and tackling fuel poverty on a much larger scale.

Developing our people, capacity and culture

Essential tools and training

Understanding and responding to the needs of our customers, particularly those who may be more vulnerable, is everyone's responsibility. Making sure our colleagues have the right skills to identify this and are empowered to take action to deliver a service that best meets the needs of the customers they are supporting is key.

In 2020/21:

- **100%** of new colleagues have received consumer vulnerability training – that is **94** people this year with others completing 2 year refresher training.

- **100%** of colleagues have received customer first training.
- **200** colleagues completed new safeguarding training which supports colleagues working with young people.
- We have fast tracked our mental health training through MIND to those most likely to interact with customers experiencing issues.

Our focus in 2021/22 is on refreshing and rolling out our consumer vulnerability training to ensure that we are ready to deliver a comprehensive service offering in RIIO-ED2.

MIND training

New

We know from colleague, partner and customer feedback that the COVID pandemic has had a detrimental effect on many peoples' mental health. We have fast tracked our 3+hour training course delivered by MIND which:

- Raises awareness of mental health and how it can vary.
- Explains how mental health problems can impact on us and our customers.
- Helps us to understand how best to respond to and support our customers.
- Builds skills to look after our mental health and wellbeing at work while supporting customers.
- Shares practical tips for supporting people and provides sources of support and information.
- Supports our team of 60+ mental health first-aiders.

Strong governance, accountability and resourcing

Colleagues across our business are accountable for service development and delivery for vulnerable customers and over the last 12 months the link between our senior managers and local delivery teams has been essential in further testing, scaling and embedding services. This is clear to see in the roll out of our suitcase generators and silent power customer support vehicles.

The local teams in our six regions, particularly General Managers and Customer Service Managers have worked hard to understand their local area, through data and more face to face engagement, so they have the ability to understand the specific challenges of service mobilisation and are then able to overcome them and maximise the impact of the available resources.

Our Social Responsibility Management Group (SRMG) comprises Senior Managers from across the business who are responsible for improving and developing services which

consider and address the needs of vulnerable customers and wider societal issues impacting the customers we serve. Each member has Consumer Vulnerability and Social Responsibility improvement plans in place. The group meets monthly and reports on progress monthly to our Executive team through our established business governance process.

Measuring success

We have clear methodologies to evaluate the success of our strategy and plans. Our success can be measured in the following ways:

- Demonstrable improvements or increases (such as the number of people recruited to our PSM).
- External validation and feedback through Broader Measure of Customer Service (BMCS) scores and external audit.
- Expert assurance (such as our Social Issues Expert Group, Stakeholder Relations Management Group and Executive team).

- Quantification of outcomes and benefits.
- We also use audits and accreditations (BSI consumer vulnerability audit and international CSR assessment) to ensure our support services are fully embedded across the business.

The SRMG is the group that leads the service improvements which are introduced using the project management and impact measurement processes and tools, set out in Parts 1 and 2 of this submission, to inform their decision making.

One of the key decisions this year was the future of the **Energy Heroes** project as the current contract ended. Following an impact assessment on the outcomes and benefits as a successful part of our delivery model to extend our reach and support for customers experiencing fuel poverty we have now embedded the service, committing to delivering the programme to **30 schools reaching 9450+ pupils every year.**

Embedded

Energy Heroes – impact and benefit calculation

Our schools programme delivering class assemblies, an energy audit and a series of six curriculum-based maths lessons centred on the development of pupils' data handling and problem solving skills, will improve their understanding of energy and climate control.

Benefit value

- **£313,525** in-year.
- **£3.3 million** cumulative savings across the 5-year programme.
- Calculated through reduction in electricity usage and therefore reduced bill cost and reduced CO₂ emissions for schools, pupils, families of pupils and teachers.

2015 to 2020 outcomes and benefits

- **36,050** pupils reached at **111 schools**.
- Household fuel bill savings of just under **£1.2 million**.
- School energy bills savings of **£200,000**.
- Associated CO₂ savings will be around **6,700 tonnes**.

2021 update

This year we have reached **9,450 children in 30 schools**. In addition we have moved parts of this proven initiative online, freeing up resources to deliver in-school sessions, in more areas with high deprivation. We have also added the training of teachers to the programme with 30 teachers being trained in delivering the course annually, so extending our reach and increasing sustainability as they are able to continue to deliver the programme to multiple groups of children post the pandemic impact.

The digital and sustainable approach to Energy Heroes delivery will be tested for reach and effectiveness for the next year. This will help us to set targets, in consultation, as part of our longer-term plans – beyond 2023.

Our colleagues in action – supporting vulnerable communities

Embedded

On 2nd February 2021 we had a power cut in the Bramley area of Leeds. The weather conditions were icy along with significant snowfall and **70 customers** were impacted including a affordable social housing retirement accommodation with **34** residents who were without power for almost **12** hours.

Our customer service vehicle was sent to provide on site support. Our ambassadors identified customers with a wide range of complex needs including a child with a feeding tube through to a diabetic, Raynaud's disease, customers with steel plates and someone who was reliant on an oxygen tank. Each customer was assessed and a range of services were

provided tailored to their specific needs. Our support van was on site for seven hours with the team door knocking each property taking hot drinks and snacks, filling water bottles, handing out blankets, socks and providing residents with up to date information about the power cut. Hot meals were also provided and delivered to residents so that they did not have to leave their homes during the freezing weather conditions.

When the power was restored our priority service team contacted each of the residents the following day to ensure that our records were updated with the correct contact information and priority needs for future communication.



Susan AmazonAddict Mountford we've had a power cut since 4am this morning and I can not commend Northern Power Grid enough, the power is now finally back on but those guys have worked in awful conditions outside today (heavy snow) to get us sorted and all day long there customer care vans have been on site fetching hot drinks, hot food, blankets, water bottles, ringing us to check were ok, and more besides, well done guys, I appreciate everything you've all done today :-)

2h • Reply Message Tag

Developing our partnerships

Our partnerships

We see partnerships as the key to helping us deliver our commitment to being a force for good in the communities we serve. By working with local partners who have established local links we can ensure that the support we provide gets to the people and communities that need it most. These trusted partners are best placed to deliver the support our customers require. Only through these close working relationships, sharing knowledge, understanding, data, experience and resources can we identify, reach and meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our region.

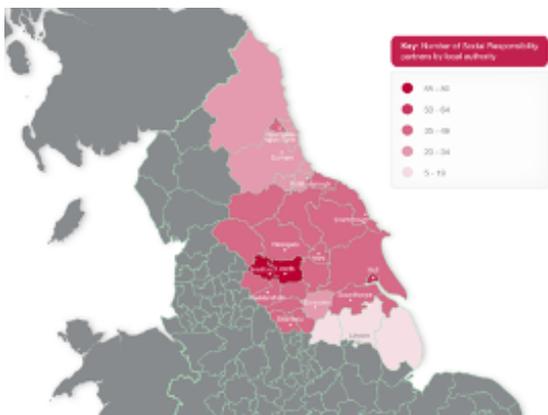
Our partnership strategy ('Stronger Together') has been refreshed this year following input from our Future Fairness Panel (representing people experiencing a range of vulnerabilities including the elderly, carers, sex workers, hoarders and the homeless), our Social Issues Expert Group, and our consumer and stakeholder panels. We now have a full regional view of our partner network aligned to the vulnerability profile of our region and carry out gap analysis and partnership recruitment to ensure we meet the needs of our region including the hard-to-reach.

Stronger Together Strategy

Aim	Our aim is by 2023 to have coverage across every vulnerability in our region, ensuring all customers can benefit from a service provided by local partners
	To address inequality across our region by providing targeted local support to those in need or impacted by our investment projects
Objectives	To reach the under-represented and hardest to reach, aligning our partnerships with the vulnerability profiles in our six operating regions
	To work with expert agencies delivering tailored programmes and support which addresses issues of affordability, energy efficiency and fuel poverty, as well as the changing landscape as we move towards decarbonisation
	To horizon scan and use local intelligence to ensure we have the most up-to-date and comprehensive set of partners required to identify and meet changing needs
	To ensure that nobody is left behind in the changing energy market, working towards fair and equitable access and benefits

Since 2015, we have developed relationships with **450+ partners** broken down below:

Delivery partners	Referral partners	Industry partners
Who support in achieving our goals and deliver projects, training or services on our behalf	Identifying individual needs and referring the people they support onto PSM and other wider support services we offer	Working with us to develop industry best practice, shaping policy, and developing new innovations which deliver customer and social benefits
46 partners	355 partners	50+ partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens Advice and Green Doctor • AGE UK Bradford and North Tyneside • Money and Pensions Advice Service • Energy Heroes • Partners through our Community Fund • Barnardo's • Local Authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities • NHS • Charities • Community Groups • Parish Councils • Community Energy Groups • Health Organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Gas Networks • Cadent • Yorkshire Water • Northumbrian Water • Nissan • NEA • Electricity Suppliers



Our mapping tool allows us to review the partners in place against the vulnerability criteria and undertake gap analysis. We are able to horizon scan for our region, focusing on the challenges particular to our area including the transition from carbon production industries, an ageing population and ageing workforce. Our social responsibility data is crucial for ensuring that awareness of our community focussed action is high with charity and community partners that can champion our offering to vulnerable customers. These partners are the key to making sure the right service is utilised by the right person at the right time.

We select and evaluate our partners in the following ways, ensuring organisations:

1. Meet our vulnerability criteria and/or support our sustainability objectives.
2. Are locally driven to provide support for vulnerable customers with the ability to use available resources to promote initiatives related to energy efficiency, fuel poverty, encouraging renewables, enabling decarbonisation and offering support for vulnerable customers.
3. Are keen to develop sustainability beyond initial funding through taking up support packages available which includes training, data sharing, networking and colleague volunteering.
4. Can offer insight, scalability or replicability across the region ensuring all customer benefits are realised from the support offered.

Through these 4 steps we are able to identify, select and set up a partnership that is mutually beneficial to both the organisation and ourselves as well as the customers in our region. In 2020/21 our focus has been around developing partnerships with local organisations in primarily urban areas who are able to support vulnerable groups during the pandemic, which we identified as a priority through our gap analysis, research and insight from existing partners.

New partners in 2020/21

Local organisation pilots for regional impact

Age UK North Tyneside and Bradford are new referral partners identified as gaps in our vulnerability mapping. We are piloting a referral model with them to stock Priority Service Membership packs in community hubs (for when restrictions are lifted), offer assisted sign-up to be offered by Age UK staff to enable people to access the Priority Service Membership more easily, share social media

activity, reflecting key messages and relevant links to important information. Using jointly branded literature and offering a financial contribution to support the dissemination of information and key messages to their networks e.g. we can incorporate our messaging on their communications and contribute to postage.

Outcomes

- ✔ Age UK North Tyneside have sent out letters funded by us and scheduled all of our new PSM videos to be shared through their social media channels with a following of **5,675** and average monthly reach of **79,750**.
- ✔ Following the pilot we aim to be able to partner up with all Age UK charities in our region.

New

We identified young adults on the edge of care and care leavers as a particularly vulnerable group, through our Children's Society partnership back in 2016 and our Yorkshire Energy Doctor Partnership through our Community Partnering Fund in 2020. Through this we learnt that the most effective support we can offer is aligning to a partnership where we can deliver energy support advice and enhance our engagement. Through our new partnership with Barnardo's we are:

- Sharing support resources and information packs updated to engage young people,

co-designed with a cohort of **40** young people Barnardo's supports.

- Providing young people and families with education packs and supporting them to sign up for the PSM.
- Ensuring young people are represented on our Future Fairness panel.
- Providing funding towards Northumberland Supported Lodgings service which provides young people aged 16 to 24, who are homeless or are leaving care, with a room in a private home where they become a member of the

household. Host families provide a safe and supportive environment, working alongside professional services to help and support the young person in gaining skills for independent adult life.

Outcomes

- ✔ Energy packs co-created with **40** young people.
- ✔ **3,000** energy packs being distributed.
- ✔ **200** children supported through supported lodgings service.

Zero Carbon Yorkshire - Developing a good carbon practice network, it supports individuals, groups and organisations in the region to reduce their carbon footprint. The aim is to bring together Yorkshire communities to co-produce a roadmap for a climate-smart, successful, sustainable and resilient county.

Ignite Imaginations - A community arts organisation and charity based in Sheffield, which aims to **connect with individuals and communities across the city through the arts**. Through activities and workshops, it helps people to gain new skills and confidence.

Tangram Housing Co-operative - Run by tenants, for tenants. The co-operative provides **hands-on educational sessions** on how to carry out internal insulation works, as well as offering tenants information about saving on their fuel bills, how to protect their homes against Carbon Monoxide, and the PSM.

Bradford Study Support Network - increasing learning and skills, addressing barriers to learning and **promoting social inclusion within Bradford's disadvantaged communities**, for individuals across all ages and abilities.

Affinity 2020 CIC, Rotherham - They support children and young adults up to the age of 25 who have experienced life in care, including care leavers. They are **supporting and training teachers** in STEM and developing a 'Looked After Children' booklet.

That Friday Feeling - Working to **reduce social isolation** for people living in south Leeds through an allotment, demonstrating the possibilities for friendship, a shared hobby and savings that can be made when growing your own vegetables.

Selby Big Local - Tackling social isolation, improving people's health and wellbeing, and creating new opportunities for change. **Community Fridge** is a project that aims to equip residents with the knowledge and confidence to prepare healthy, nutritious food on a budget, while training a cohort of **Energy Champions** who will share advice on energy efficiency.

Growing Better CIC - A social enterprise and 'vertical urban farm' in Leeds, **dedicated to better mental health and wellbeing** through urban farming activities.

Using our annual gap analysis, which maps partners by vulnerability supported and geography, against our social data and future social issues (to 2030) research, we have identified the following areas to focus on in 2021/22:

- Comprehensive capture of community groups supporting customers that are medically dependent on electricity.
- Rural community groups to improve partner support in key areas where customers experience isolation.
- Groups who represent customers with communications needs including hearing, sight and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), to target and increase priority service recruitment across these vulnerabilities.

Sustainable partnerships

Embedded

We see our role as an anchor organisation with our partners and through a challenging year for everyone, it has never been more important that we work together to reach and support our most vulnerable customers and communities. In addition to funding direct support for customers, we have a responsibility to use the resources available to us to support our partners to be sustainable within their communities beyond this funding. In 2020/21 we refreshed the resources and communications available on our website, we continued to offer our partners access to our social data and delivered training to increase their knowledge, referrals and the support they can offer.

Outcomes

- ✔ **Organisational sustainability** has also been supported through the creation of **7** new jobs and **6** additional grants or donations that have been secured as a result of the Community Partnering Fund.
- ✔ **248** people have been trained, including in Level 2 Fuel Debt Advice in the Community certification, National Energy Action's Level 3 Award in Energy Awareness, Green Doctors BPEC Energy Efficiency Training and Yorkshire Energy Doctor's interactive online course.

Stronger together throughout the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has left people more aware than ever of their growing reliance on the energy system and, in some cases, has left vulnerable people more isolated than before. In response, stakeholders asked us to enhance our customer service to meet the changing needs associated with the pandemic. Using key insight from our partners and our tracking surveys we developed our **COVID Customer Charter**.

COVID Customer Charter



We're making it easier to get in contact



We're giving families a helping hand



We're supporting businesses and the community



We're providing support for young people



We're powering our communities with greener energy

In addition to adapting our day-to-day delivery to a more proactive face-to-face and localised model we have significantly expanded our energy efficiency advice services, and communications to address increased financial pressures and **partnered with MIND** to fast track our mental health training to front-line staff and promote the support they provide through our customer communications.

Recognising the increased pressure on our partners services, we have supported them through sharing of data, additional training and an additional **£50,000 funding** to help them to adapt their services to be COVID safe and accessible. In some cases this has seen a considerable increase in customers supported. We have also focussed our new partnerships on particularly vulnerable groups care leavers, children in poverty and the elderly who may be most susceptible to isolation.

A comprehensive service to alleviate fuel poverty

Engagement activity

131 customers experiencing fuel poverty, their representatives and fuel poverty experts engaged through Fuel poverty research - barriers and overcoming them, Consumer Vulnerability conference, Social Issues round table and our expert groups.

Key feedback

We have been engaging service users, expert groups and stakeholders to understand customers and service users needs in order to shape our current services and approach for a number of years. In summary our stakeholders and experts told us:

- Support needs to be targeted and tailored based on an understanding of needs.
- Fuel poverty is not a stand-alone issue and is often interdependent on other vulnerabilities

or circumstances and needs to be addressed holistically.

- Dependent on circumstances and the duration or depth of fuel poverty an individual is experiencing, their needs will differ significantly.
- We have a clear role in prevention not just addressing those with acute needs.
- Local knowledge and partnerships are key to successful engagement, interventions and support.

Fuel poverty affects 11% of households in England. Around **416,000** of those households are in our region. Fuel poverty is linked to low incomes, high energy costs and inefficient, usually older housing. We have been developing our approach based on stakeholder and customer feedback for a number of years. This year we have formalised **our guiding principles** along with agreeing our targets to the end of 2023 in consultation with our Future Fairness Panel, our Social Issues Expert Group, and our consumer and stakeholder panels.

We are currently undertaking extensive engagement with customers and stakeholders to determine our levels of ambition and shape our fuel poverty programmes from 2023 to 2028 (RIIO-ED2 business plan) and beyond. Our short-term targets (to 2023) are:

Total reach by 2023:

192,603

Total financial benefit by 2023:

in excess of £5,000,000

Our guiding principles



Programme	Example delivery channels	Target metrics (2021-2023)
Direct holistic support services	Powergrid Care - Citizens Advice and Green Doctors	Beneficiaries: 25,024 Financial benefit: >£2.5m
Education and Community Outreach	Energy Heroes/Community Partnering Fund	Beneficiaries: 38,800 Financial benefit: >£400,000
Campaign and awareness raising	Regionally targeted social media campaigns for households experiencing or at risk of fuel poverty	Beneficiaries: 300,000 Financial benefit: £30m
Lighter touch telephony advice	Money and Pensions Advice Service	Targets TBC following 2021 pilot

1. Targeting those most in need through data and intelligence – Energy Efficiency Campaign

Embedded

This year we purchased additional data which allowed us to analyse at neighbourhood level energy efficiency of homes alongside fuel poverty data. **This information informed the targeting of our Energy Saving Campaign**, trialling a new animation which offers short, simple tips and advice to help customers save money on their energy bills. Shared during the peak of the pandemic it also aimed to support local people who may be trying to save money on their bills whilst at home more or who may be struggling with their annual energy costs. **We digitally targeted the nine geographic locations most in need** based on our data using display ads on Google and video ads on YouTube. It was the most successful campaign of this type in terms of reach and efficiency that we have ever run.

Outcomes

- ✓ We estimate an average saving of **£126** per year for every household who follows the advice.
- ✓ We had **10,629** clicks on our Google ads resulting in an estimated total savings of **£1.34m**.
- ✓ We had **96,275** views on YouTube resulting in an estimated total savings of **£12.17m**.
- ✓ With both campaigns combined and significantly ramped up from 2019-20, we estimate a total regional saving of **£13.5m** a years, a **4,800% (or 48 fold)** increase on last year's campaign.
- ✓ Average Cost Per Click or View: **£0.11** Google and **£0.02** YouTube.

by turning electrical appliances off at the wall



*Based on switching off appliances and devices that are left on idle and standby throughout the year.

82% of customers feel less stressed after receiving support from Powergrid Care

Harry's story - "I am 62 and live alone in an assisted living rented property. I am hard of hearing and have several health problems, inc. Epilepsy and Diabetes. I rely on benefits for my income.

My heating is included in my rent and I pay NPower for my electricity. I was worried I might owe money for my electricity because I cannot easily access the meter to give readings. Plus when I checked my bank statement recently, I noticed there was a change to my Direct Debit as it said the payment wasn't to NPower. I didn't know what this meant, so I contacted Citizens Advice.

The adviser contacted NPower and found out that NPower customers had been migrated to

EON with the same terms and conditions. As I'm keen to have a smart meter, the adviser was able to confirm I am scheduled to be contacted for the January roll out. The adviser also contacted the Warden for my property and asked them to do a meter reading for me, so that I can make sure my bill is up-to-date.

The adviser told me about the PSR and helped with a Warm Homes Discount application. As my home always feels really cold, they also referred me to the housing department so that they could assess that my heating is adequate. I'm so relieved they were able to help me to sort all of this out."

Angela's Story - "I am a single parent; I have 3 school aged children and a son aged 23.

I have severe mental health problems and have been off sick from work. I am getting Statutory Sick Pay, but this will end soon and I'm not well enough to return to work. My eldest son cares for me and deals with a lot of my day-to-day affairs because I am not able to cope with them. I was getting really worried about my income so approached Citizens Advice for help.

The adviser looked into my income situation, she advised me that I should claim Employment Support Allowance, Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment. The advisers also explained that my son should claim carers allowance for looking after me. She helped with making all the claims."

Community Partnering Fund

In order to reach the hardest to reach and most vulnerable in our communities, our Community Partnering Fund is delivered through the Community Foundation Leeds, in partnership with Northern Gas Networks. This helps us to identify new partners and emerging vulnerabilities, and respond through these new trusted partners in the most effective way. The fund has been running since 2015 and in its current form since 2018. In the past twelve months five of the seven completed projects underway addressed fuel poverty. **A further 15 projects were awarded funding in 2020** and these will deliver and report over the coming year.

Outcomes

- ✔ **14,000** people of all ages have benefited from the projects funded in this round, including local residents facing poverty and financial hardship, people with multiple disabilities, people who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation, families, users of community centres, young people aged 18-25 moving into their first tenancies and primary school children.
- ✔ **143** people have been signed up to the Priority Service Membership (PSM).
- ✔ **219** people have improved their home conditions or living environment.
- ✔ **29** new volunteers have been engaged.

Dial Leeds – Community Confident

Dial Leeds is a small disabled people’s user-led organisation whose model of service delivery is peer support where disabled people come together to support and provide services for other disabled people. Their Community Confident programme engaged and educated local people to become community influencers in issues including fuel poverty, the Priority Service Membership and Warm Homes Discount, and gas and electrical safety awareness through 11 weeks of pop-up sessions, before adapting to a model of virtual delivery when COVID forced their centre to be closed.

“Mrs J has mental health issues and suffers with agoraphobia. Her husband has breathing problems and physical difficulties[...] During weekly contact with the client it became clear that they should be

registered for the Priority Service Membership which we did for them. We also discussed energy awareness issues including bills, CO and the use of alarms and condensation.[...] We did manage to discuss condensation, its affects, causes and ways to reduce it and Mrs J has reported that putting such things into place such as keeping doors shut and windows open while cooking (as well as using pan lids) has reduced condensation and helped her husband’s breathing[...]. We will be continuing to support Mrs J and plan to do a series of follow up visits once it is safe to do so to cover any issues we have not been able to resolve over the phone. Mrs J is extremely thankful for all our help and is not sure how she would have managed without our help during this difficult time, and is looking forward to our future help. We are also helping with welfare benefits work around Personal Independence Payments.”

Now in its seventh year, our **Powergrid Care** programme is fully embedded and we have seen an increase in impact over the past two years at no additional cost. As the maturity of the relationships we have with these strategic partners deepens we are able to deliver a more efficient service and respond to the changing needs of the communities they are serving. The service responds to the personal needs identified by our customers and helps them receive relevant, holistic support through **Citizens Advice** and **Green Doctor**. This year has seen both partners adapt from face to face support to digital, telephone and postal services (of energy saving measures) due to the pandemic. This has seen demand for their services and their reach increase significantly.

Outcomes

- ✔ **5,925** customers received holistic advice and support directly – an increase of **25%** in 12 months.
- ✔ **624** overall PSM registrations – signed up through trusted channels and with improved understanding of PSM services on offer.
- ✔ **£296,676** in customer benefit supported in switching, tariff or supplier intervention to reduce energy bills.
- ✔ **£202** average benefit per customer. **1.12m** overall customer benefit – an increase of **23%** in 12 months.

Powergrid Care	2019/20	2020/21	Cumulative (since 2015)
Overall investment	£207,000	£207,000	£813,845
Overall beneficiaries	4,482	5,925	20,386
Overall PSM registrations	1,362	1,406	3,337
Energy saving services installed	4,275	8,848	21,639
Warm Homes Discount	50	56	176
Energy related issues	39% clients	65% clients	-
Overall financial benefit	£706,630	£1,124,970	£2,896,249

Recognising the need for multiple entry points and the extension of services which can be accessed before crisis point we have partnered with the **Money Advisor Network** to support any customers who may have money worries. Our customers can access free advice backed by the **Money Advice Service**. The advisors behind the network offer independent and impartial money and debt advice over the phone or online. Customers can choose from an immediate call back or a digital debt advice referral. Customers can also access the **Money Navigator Tool** that helps them find

guidance if they have been impacted by the COVID pandemic. By answering a series of questions (in under 30 seconds) it helps show customers what financial matters they should consider for their circumstances. It provides tailored guidance and, where appropriate, directs customers to specialist third party advice that can help with their problems. We have introduced the service this year with customers able to self-refer online and contact centre colleagues trained in referring to the new service. We will be promoting the service through our **fuel poverty communications**

campaign this year and by adding this to our partner resources to raise awareness and increase impact.

Projected outcomes following full launch in March 2021

- ✔ Service promoted to **50,000** PSM customers most likely to benefit.
- ✔ Easily accessible service.
- ✔ Financial savings for customers will be tracked throughout 2021.

2021/22 Consumer vulnerability priorities:

- Publish revised Consumer Vulnerability Strategy to support long-term goals.
- Expand Age Concern partnerships within our region.
- Continue to target under-represented vulnerable groups for Priority Service Membership through targeted campaigns and partnerships.
- Develop practical implementation plan to support Nobody left behind approach.
- Embed Money and Pensions Advice Service and digital campaign approach.
- Continue to support our local trusted expert partners in responding to COVID impact and recovery.
- Embed Energy Savings Trust app and home efficiency tool.
- Data refresh on fuel poverty at postcode level to further target campaigns and services.

The screenshot shows a website titled "A force for good in our communities". The navigation menu includes: Strong partnerships, Help with money worries, Money Navigator Tool, Community Partnering Fund, Citizens Advice, NGA - Action for Warm Homes, Green Doctor, Energy Helpline, Ahead Partnership, Teach First, Volunteering, WISE, Priority Services Membership, Education, and New Power Generation. The "Strong partnerships" section features an image of two hands shaking and text stating: "We are committed to the way in which we deliver our commitment to being a force for good in the communities we serve. By working with local partners who have established and local links we can ensure that the support we provide goes to the people and communities that need it most. We're always interested to hear from community groups and charities. Click here to email."

Our force for good website provides access to additional partner and energy efficiency support services.

