

Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer  
Vulnerability Incentive 2021-22

## Part 3

**Setting out our consumer  
vulnerability strategy and approach  
to partnerships, fuel poverty  
programmes, and ensuring there's  
Nobody Left Behind**





## Who we are at Northern Powergrid

Northern Powergrid is the electricity distribution business for North East England, Yorkshire, and northern Lincolnshire. We deliver power safely and reliably to 8m people across 3.9m homes and businesses. Our network comprises more than 63k substations and 96k km of overhead power lines and underground cables, spanning some 25k km<sup>2</sup>.

Every year, we report on our Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) Incentive activity by publishing a summary report showing how we engage with our diverse range of stakeholders and tackle critical issues relating to consumer vulnerability.

This three-part report demonstrates how our engagement activities address wider social and environmental issues that impact our customers, our communities, and all of us, while ensuring we prioritise people's power through the ongoing efficiency and reliability of our network.

### Our submission is divided into three parts and this is Part 3:

**Part 1:** an overview of our strategies and approach to ensure customer and stakeholder voices are 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 and approach to partnerships, fuel poverty programmes, and ensuring there's Nobody Left Behind.



## Contents Part 3

Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability Incentive 2021-22

<b>Introduction to SECV 2021-22, Part 3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy Focuses for 2021-22</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Storm Arwen</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Measuring Our Impact</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Stronger Together</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Priority Services Membership</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Fuel Poverty</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Nobody Left Behind</b>	<b>9</b>

### Minimising the environmental impact of the SECV print submission



This year, we wanted to share how we went about minimising the environmental footprint of our print submission, which was printed by **Park** and hand-delivered to Ofgem via public transport to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the 'dirty last mile' of delivery.

- Carbon emissions offset by ClimatePartner.
- 100% recycled paper stock.
- Print company recycles oils to reduce waste.
- Biodegradable wallets.
- Hand-delivered via public transport to eliminate private transport emissions.

**Glossary of terms:** The energy industry is full of acronyms and unusual terms. You can find simple explanations of everything we talk about in this document at [ceg.northernpowergrid.com](http://ceg.northernpowergrid.com).

# Introduction to our SECV report 2021-22: Part 3

## A message from our Consumer Vulnerability Manager



2021-22 was a devastating and challenging year for our customers, particularly the vulnerable and fuel-poor. As an anchor organisation, we are responding strategically: with both a bird's-eye view of our entire region, and by zooming in on specific areas of social deprivation or particular vulnerabilities. This approach is vital as the cost-of-living crisis pushes a further 1m households in our region into fuel poverty. For many of the 8m people we serve, daily life is now a choice between heating or eating.

### We are reacting at speed to scale up our support, including:

- Significantly scaling fuel poverty support to 100% of our region from spring 2022:
  - Extending Citizens Advice funding to cover the four areas of highest vulnerability; targeting top 10 by 2023.
  - Partnering with energy retailer Utilita to reach two areas of high fuel poverty; scaling to 50% of our region by 2027.
  - With Barnardo's, supporting low-income families with kids under two; targeting 500 similar families by late 2023.

With the Centre for Sustainable Energy we have futureproofed our partnership model, developing an extensive ecosystem of support through the identification of new partners alongside our existing network. This approach ensures we address barriers and bridge any identified gaps. We are also building partner capacity through education and best practice sharing.

Catherine Harris

## A message from our Director of Field Operations



Field Operations is our engine room of 1,600+ colleagues who deliver our customers' needs, including repairs, new connections, building substations, network maintenance, and major investment projects to increase resilience and reduce power cuts. We're out there 24/7, meeting many vulnerable customers and hearing their views – this year, especially around Storm Arwen.

Lessons from Arwen are already being embedded in the business – *full response below right*. These changes will be valuable across the industry, not just here at Northern Powergrid, and we are leading talks with fellow network operators such as Northern Gas Networks (NGN) and UK Power Networks (UKPN) to formalise collaborative welfare and storm arrangements.

It's vital that we understand the many ways in which people can be vulnerable, and that there's no catch-all solution – which is why we previously put in place a regional customer service structure, to respond in a bespoke way. This year it was tested by successive storms, including a power cut in Co. Durham which meant 372 customers lost power for the third time in 2022. We knew this area had a high proportion of elderly, vulnerable customers, so our Regional Customer Service Manager Chris Mitchell was able to tailor support, including generators, hot food and accommodation.

Andy Bilclough

Summary of 2021-22 initiatives		New	Embedded	Scaled up	Innovation	Hard to reach	Improving data	Partnership	Page number
Focus	Initiative								
	Partnering with Tangram House to deliver hands-on insulation workshops to cut tenants' bills & energy waste (estimated to be up to 20% in many homes)		•		•	•			4
	Enhancing our colleagues' vulnerability training & toolkit to deliver best-in-class customer service & truly embed our goals, so there's Nobody Left Behind		•	•		•	•		4
PSM	Embedding & enhancing our PSM support model to target cross-industry cohesion & reduce customer confusion		•	•		•	•		5
	Targeting PSM recruitment with Audience Engine & partnership working to meet & exceed our +20% p.a. targets	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	5
	Collaborating on data to deliver the best outcomes for all customers, particularly during major events such as Arwen	•				•	•	•	6
	Collaborating with National Energy Action & Newcastle University to maintain power during cuts for those medically dependent on electricity, as part of our resilience for vulnerable customers strategy		•		•	•		•	6
	Scaling our fuel poverty intervention programme to cover 100% of the region		•	•		•			7
Fuel Poverty	Partnering with Utilita on energy efficiency help in areas of significant fuel poverty	•			•	•		•	7
	Enhancing our Barnardo's partnership to support 500 families with children under two as part of our low-income support strategy		•	•		•		•	7
	Delivering British Plumbing Employers Council (BPEC) Energy Efficiency training across 100% of our region, as part of our Nobody Left Behind strategy			•	•	•		•	8
	Using bespoke Audience Engine software to target delivery of vulnerability communications & increase accuracy by 95%	•				•	•	•	8
	Working with utility peers to deliver a coordinated approach to fuel poverty advice during the cost-of-living crisis	•				•	•	•	8
Nobody Left Behind	Delivering in-depth insight to tailor future services through engagement & research		•			•		•	9
	Collaborating with partners to develop Nobody Left Behind initiatives, a practical toolkit, & pilot series	•			•	•		•	9
	Developing advice & education services to support vulnerable customers through the energy transition	•				•		•	9
	Increasing decarbonisation education programme targets to reach 8k more of the next generation		•	•				•	10

# Our Consumer Vulnerability Strategy focuses for 2021-22

In 2021-22, in response to feedback, our vulnerability initiatives fell into four strategic focus areas:

### 1. Stronger Together

Our newly diversified SIEG offered monthly scrutiny as we ambitiously scaled up our regional leadership, increasing partnerships by 20%. Together with NGN, we funded 12 grassroots organisations with £100k, doubling support from one to two years to allow each time to embed their work. And we brought together partners, such as Green Doctor with The Bread and Butter Thing, to address hand-in-hand vulnerabilities and close the gaps.

### 2. Priority Services Membership (PSM)

Our PSM helps us direct and tailor both everyday services and those in extreme events such as Storm Arwen, where we prioritised people medically dependent on electricity – 17% of the PSM. This year, we focused on recruiting most at-risk and underrepresented customers, driving a 23% increase in direct sign-ups. Working with Experian we revised data to identify vulnerability at a property level and targeted increases

in areas of rural isolation. We began a data cleanse to ensure we can deliver vital support and adapt services, e.g. by knowing which of the 30+ languages in our region our customers speak, and we embedded the 'membership' model requested by stakeholders.

### 3. Fuel Poverty

Prior to 2021-22, acute fuel poverty affected 430k+ households we serve – but data modelling shows that the energy price crisis, April's price cap increase, stagnating wages and potential recession will combine to increase that figure to more than 1m households across our region. Low-income families may lose one-fifth of disposable cash and all budgets are under pressure from inflation. So, we have significantly scaled up our support model to reach more fuel-poor households through face-to-face intervention, and scaled our fuel poverty programme to give 100% coverage across the region. We will be using a detailed analytical tool, Audience Engine, to ensure we target communications to those households in acute fuel poverty, combining reach with accuracy of intervention.

### 4. Nobody Left Behind

In 2021-22, our focus was to support customers in the journey to net zero. We partnered with Energy Saving Trust to understand how the most vulnerable engage with net zero, and brought together 150 partners for a series of events to build understanding, capacity and capability to help customers and communities navigate the energy transition, co-creating a toolkit for partners to signpost and provide advice, action and support on both energy efficiency and decarbonisation.

**We are experiencing a seismic shift in energy prices and a cost-of-living crisis not seen since the 1970s. This requires unprecedented action and Northern Powergrid has a critical role to play to protect fuel-poor and vulnerable customers. I am delighted to see them show regional leadership, from board strategy to identifying those in urgent need, and delivering relevant and enhanced support.**

Derek Lickorish MBE, Chair, our Social Issues Expert Group (SIEG)

# Storm Arwen: fast-tracking responses to lessons learned

Storm Arwen put our Part 2 focus area, resilience, front and centre. Here, we share our immediate welfare response – a full report will be shared next year.

Arwen demonstrated on an alarming scale the potential impact of future extreme weather events, how quickly anyone can be made vulnerable, and how existing vulnerabilities can be exacerbated. Many people are now apprehensive about decarbonisation and an increasing reliance on electricity. We must educate and support all customers through the energy transition, but particularly the vulnerable and hard to reach. And we must address with ambition and urgency the weaknesses Arwen exposed across our network and our organisation. So, we are now:

### 1. Leading talks with other DNOs and utilities to formalise a support pact

UKPN and NGN offered us vital help during Arwen, which we reciprocated. We are initiating talks with other DNOs and utilities to formalise agreements.

### 2. Preparing all customers, including those on the PSM, for storm events

48 hours before Storm Malik, we reached 3m of our customers, outlining our preparations and giving guidance, information, reassurance and resources.

### 3. Proactively communicating with customers during high-impact events

- Turning off all automated text messaging during Malik.
- Broadcasting communications via our Outreach Programme.
- Providing latest responses *and* when more accurate information will land.
- Tailoring messaging to help free up support for the most vulnerable.

### 4. Mobilising with partners to deliver more effective support

Through local resilience forums (LRFs) such as in Durham, we were able to mobilise more quickly than we otherwise would. In Arwen we created rest centres to ensure help was within reasonable distance of those worst-affected, and partnered with LRFs and the military to coordinate door knocking to reach those customers. We have now developed a blueprint for welfare provision and rest-centre mobilisation.

### 5. Reaching out directly to the PSM

Addressing concerns raised by MPs in Arwen, we changed our approach for Malik, directly contacting PSM customers after the first Met Office storm warning to find out what support was needed and explain next steps, such as if they weren't back on power by 6pm, they should book a hotel that

we would reimburse; or we would supply food or reimburse meals up to £15 per person per meal.

### 6. Fast-tracking communications tech

Accelerating our new telephony platform (Part 2, page 3) will free up contact centre staff, increase capacity for customers' calls, and open avenues for text and app channels. But many people lost phone signal during Arwen, and technology isn't always the answer, so we are discussing the move from analogue to digital.

### 7. Personalising our service to customers impacted by Arwen

We have implemented an action plan to flag to our customer service team where a customer experiencing a power cut has previously been impacted by a large-scale event such as Arwen. We then contact them directly to offer personalised extra support.

**During Storm Arwen, two of our overhead line workers, Adam Hudson and Nick Rowe, spent four hours clearing the single road out of their village with chainsaws, all so they could spend another 12 hours at work, restoring power for people.**

Andy Bilclough

# Measuring our impact

In Part 1, we detailed our approach to data-driven decision making and how we use SROI to both prioritise our projects and to measure their impact. Throughout Part 3 we've shared projects that include SROI impact measurements. On this page, we demonstrate how we use SROI modelling for different purposes: to measure our performance, prioritise initiatives, and ensure we are considering data when we are scaling and adjusting projects to deliver customer benefits.

## SROI modelling in action: Ahead Partnership

As an enduring pillar of our fuel poverty programme, aspiration raising and education around science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) remains a priority – backed by our Citizens Panel, which challenged us to further expand these programmes. Our Ahead Partnership engages more than 8k young people across our network and, in the next five years, will be helping them to increase their (and their family's) understanding of net zero, decarbonisation, and increase uptake of STEM subjects.

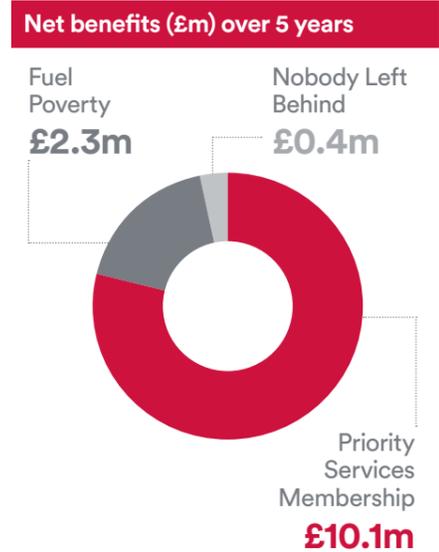
To model the benefits, we:

- Developed a bespoke proxy that valued the long-term benefits provided to the students and society of increasing students in STEM education.

- Undertook significant research to understand the salary uplift for a student who pursues a STEM career coupled with the realised wider social benefits.
- Worked to understand the success rate of any one student achieving a STEM career following our engagement.

This SROI was used to assess the effectiveness of proposals put forward by expert partners and informed our decision making.

We believe that this programme will continue to develop and expand into the future, as evidenced by the positive net present value of £264.4k over 5 years.



## How to read our SROI modelling throughout Part 3: using our Ahead Partnership SROI modelling as an example

1-year SROI				5-year SROI			
Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI	Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI
£45k	£80.3k	£35.3k	£0.78	£265.4k	£529.7k	£264.4k	£1.00

The total cost of the initiative

The total benefit of the initiative (discounted to the present)

The total benefit of the initiative less costs (discounted to the present)

The £s of net benefit, per £ spent

The same figures, over a five-year appraisal period (i.e. including future benefits)

## SROI modelling in action: fuel poverty education approach

Increases in energy and water bills are placing additional burdens on our customers, so this year we sought to expand energy efficiency education for all 3.9m homes and businesses we serve. We partnered with NGN, Northumbrian Water, and Yorkshire Water to create an engaging educational leaflet, giving customers information on reducing energy and water bills, and raising awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide.

To model the value of this project, we:

- Analysed the number of people who responded to the leaflet and took on the associated advice.
- Used trusted proxies from the industry-wide DNO tool to calculate the social value of reducing stress for an individual, and the impact of carbon monoxide injuries on the NHS.
- Recognised the direct impact on customers' bills.

By understanding the uptake of the programme over time, we can alter the advice we give. At present, the programme reports a net present value of £118k over five years, with an SROI value of £2.69 per £1 spent. We believe that all people can continually benefit from this advice, and we will work to refine and deliver additional value for the programme in our effort to expand its reach in the coming years.

# Stronger Together



It is only through partnerships – with charities, local, regional and grassroots organisations, and official bodies – that we can effectively target all vulnerabilities and have true impact. As a regional leader, we have the strategic capability and overview to bring partners together to help us deliver, and help them build capacity and capability, so that together, we close the gaps. Here, we share activities delivered through partnership in 2021-22, and outline where we plan to take them next.



## Partnering with Tangram House to deliver hands-on insulation workshops to cut tenants' bills & energy waste (estimated to be up to 20% in many homes)

**Stakeholders told us:** be a force for good and support community action.

**So we:** recognised the urgency of the energy price crisis and that families in our region are choosing between heating and eating, with those in rented accommodation at a particular disadvantage when trying to improve the energy efficiency of their homes to reduce their bills. Eight per cent more homes than the national average in our region have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or lower, meaning they are not running efficiently and wasting heat – something that can be directly and cost-effectively addressed through insulation. So we funded Tangram Housing Co-op, Leeds (where 61% dwelling have an EPC

rating of D or below) to provide hands-on educational sessions on internal insulation, as well as offering tenants information about saving on their fuel bills, how to protect their homes against carbon monoxide, and joining our PSM.

**Next, we plan to:** use learnings from this upskilling project to roll out projects to 50% of our region with similar demographics in the next five years.

*I expected learning how to fit insulation to be complicated. But I learned so much from the talk about heat loss and its financial and environmental impact, not to mention the impact on our mental and physical wellbeing. I've since spent hours and hours fitting the insulation and learning so much about how to create a warm and comfortable home. It's inspired me and other members to put together a proposal for a co-op wide roll-out of insulation, so all our members can feel the benefit.*

Workshop participant, Tangram Housing Co-op

## Stakeholder outcomes

- Insulation education delivered to 547 housing co-op members, with plans to roll out to the 10 similar co-ops across our region by the end of 2023
- To support LAs and housing associations through co-working and capacity building within communities to develop a model for locally led retro-fit (i.e. insulation)

## Enhancing our colleagues' vulnerability training & toolkit to deliver best-in-class customer service & truly embed our goals, so there's Nobody Left Behind

**Stakeholders told us:** to consider transient vulnerabilities. Through COVID-19, the growing energy crisis, and localised events (i.e. winter storms), our Citizens Panel highlighted the importance of transient vulnerability and how team members need to be equipped to identify them and provide appropriate support referrals.

**So we:** 1) Reviewed, refreshed and rolled out our vulnerable customer toolkit and training to 100% front-line colleagues. This included our enhanced services and how to deliver them, such as the PSM support model, referral partners, and services such as Money Adviser Network, Utilita and Energy Saving Trust tool.

2) Established 128 Escalate, an internal direct hotline for on-site staff to

access tailored advice when they have identified a vulnerability and are unsure how to proceed. Calls go directly to our expert PSM coordinators to advise and support. 150+ colleagues have used the hotline since its launch in October 2021.

3) Embedded vulnerability services in our core quality assurance: customers reporting low satisfaction scores now receive tailored follow-up through our quality framework and Customer Rescue services.

**Next, we plan to:** implement toolkit and training refreshes every two years to ensure all new vulnerability services are efficiently rolled out. We are assessing how we can roll these out to contractors and share the learning with our partner network through discussions with the Future Fairness group.

## Stakeholder outcomes

- Extending the reach and take-up of Money Adviser Network, Utilita and Energy Saving Trust energy efficiency tool for our customers
- Tailored vulnerability support to all customers provided via 128 Escalate across our communities

*Following a call from a PSM customer about a power cut at Fishlake, Yorkshire, I decided to deploy one of our new 'suitcase generators' to power an elderly gentleman's electric bed, which is required for feeding him. To ensure it worked, I bought a socket and fitted it to the remote end of the lead. The customer was very pleased with the generator, commenting how quiet it was and that it met his needs 100%.*

Mark Backhouse, Engineer



# Priority Services Membership (PSM)



It's only through our PSM, which details our customers' vulnerabilities – from being medically dependent on electricity to having English as a Second Language or a child under five in the household – that we are able to target, tailor and deliver our vulnerability services. But the PSM is a self-selecting group and it's vital that we encourage every person who could benefit from this tailored support to join, and that our data is as accurate as possible. This

year, we worked with Experian to enable more accurate targeting of vulnerable groups at a household level, identified our customers in rural areas at increased risk of power cuts, and addressed gaps in our partner network identifying more than 1.5k potential new partners.

Here, we share some of 2021-22's PSM initiatives and our ambitions for the future.



**+23%**  
direct sign-ups to the PSM



**NEW**  
Vulnerability-identification tool in development



**ENHANCED**  
Innovation pilot to maintain power for those medically dependent on electricity

## 1. Embedding & enhancing our PSM support model to target cross-industry cohesion & reduce customer confusion

**Stakeholders told us:** partners and customers last year shared that they wanted us to promote what was the Priority Services Register (PSR) as a membership club to remove negative associations with the word 'register'.

**So we:** overhauled our PSR communication packs, with customer feedback, co-creating new Priority

Services Membership (PSM) packs with Future Fairness Panel guidance, and designed and delivered a new targeted digital and social campaign aiming to reach all groups but, in particular, underrepresented groups on the PSM and community groups providing targeted support for these customers.

This communication reached 250k

customers leading to increased direct sign-ups by 23% and we have aligned our energy efficiency campaign to better respond to the needs of customers experiencing communications issues.

**Next, we plan to:** formally share the learnings from our rebrand with our fellow DNOs. Our ambition is to coordinate cross-industry cohesion so that the PSM looks and feels the same for all customers across all DNOs.

**250k+ REACHED**

1-year SROI				5-year SROI			
Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI	Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI
£1.0m	£2.1m	£1.1m	£1.05	£1.0m	£9.6m	£8.6m	£8.59

## 2. Targeting PSM recruitment with Audience Engine & partnership working to meet & exceed our +20% p.a. targets

**Stakeholders told us:** to improve our targeting of PSM recruitment through partnership working and better use of our Experian data.

**So we:** continued our partnership with Experian – with whom we have worked for several years to develop our social indicator mapping tools – to develop an innovative approach to identify particular vulnerabilities at household level through its new tool Audience Engine, which we plan to use as a recruitment tool. Following Arwen

and subsequent storms, we focused on identifying vulnerable customers in rural locations most at risk of a power cut, overlaying these details with vulnerability data such as age, health and fuel poverty. We are identifying at-risk, rural households and developing a targeted digital recruitment campaign for them. We will report on the outcomes in next year's SECV.

Additionally, we reviewed our partner mapping to better understand gaps and underrepresented groups, identifying about 800 potential partners who are supporting customers with communication needs, such as English as a Second Language, the

hard of hearing, and British Sign Language (BSL) users. In discussion with existing partners, we translated into the top 10 languages in our region and BSL, and shared with the 800 organisations supporting customers with communication needs.

**Next, we plan to:** roll out our use of Audience Engine from summer 2022, and identify and reach underrepresented customers on every channel they use, creating campaigns to raise awareness of the PSM, support storm response and promote energy efficiency support to households via our partnerships.

1-year SROI				5-year SROI			
Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI	Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI
£3.9k	£18.8k	£14.9k	£3.84	£3.9k	£87.7k	£83.8k	£21.64



## 3. Collaborating on data to deliver the best outcomes for all customers

**Stakeholders told us:** Ofgem and Ofwat asked us to work with water companies to make it as easy as possible to sign up to PSM across utilities. Our Citizens Panel highlighted the benefits of this to share learning and provide overall better support for vulnerable customers across our shared footprints.

**So we:** are working with the water companies in our region as part of

our Infrastructure North partnership, to automate data sharing by 2023. This data sharing forms part of our implemented storm response plans enabling targeted and joined-up support cross utility for those most in need.

Data sharing and collaboration is proven to deliver the best outcomes for all customers, and is particularly important in incidents such as Arwen.

We've shared and improved our Resilience Direct data (tailored power cut maps) with local resilience forums, emergency services and 11 additional local authorities.

**Next, we plan to:** build on our Infrastructure North cross-utility collaborative forum on data sharing including Resilience Direct where our power-cut data is held.

## 4. Developing a cross-utilities pilot to alleviate administrative difficulties for bereaved families

**Our SIEG advised us:** that during a bereavement the family have to contact all companies individually to update records and this was distressing and time consuming.

**So we:** approached the government

to propose the inclusion of utilities in their 'Tell Us Once' service. This was not possible as the service is limited to government bodies only. However, we have now partnered with Northumbria Water in its innovation project to develop a pilot for a central 'tell us once'

system for customers to span several services in the region.

**Next, we plan to:** share this learning with other DNOs and suppliers to improve the process for bereaved families.

## 5. Collaborating with National Energy Action & Newcastle University to maintain power during cuts for those medically dependent on electricity, as part of our resilience for vulnerable customers strategy

**Stakeholders told us:** to focus on resilience for the most vulnerable.

**So we:** partnered with National Energy Action to design a £0.5m innovation programme to pilot impacts of installing Tesla Powerwall batteries in homes, selecting 30 vulnerable customers who are medically dependent to participate – recruiting these customers as they were directly impacted by Arwen. This phase will test the capability of the battery to provide an uninterrupted power supply to those most at risk

during a power cut. As batteries will charge off-peak, customers can also make savings through cheap tariffs.

**Next, we plan to:** consider a roll-out that would benefit other medically

dependent customers in our region and share this learning with other DNOs to enable them to develop similar resilience measures. And, as we have 300k cases of rural isolation in Northumberland, this is the focus.

1-year SROI				5-year SROI			
Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI	Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI
£467.7k	£267.1k	-£201k	-£0.43	£467.7k	£1.2m	£780.5k	£1.67

## 6. Our immediate Storm Arwen welfare response for our vulnerable customers

For those customers we couldn't quickly reconnect during Storm Arwen and its aftermath, particularly those that are vulnerable, it was critical that we provided welfare and support, including:

- 20k hot meals to worst-affected.
- 260 locations visited by our Customer Service Vehicles.
- 1.3k hotel bookings made, prioritising the most vulnerable.

- 2k winter-warmer packs distributed inc. torches, blankets, and gloves.
- 168 colleagues out on site offering welfare support.

- 65 generators sent to vulnerable customers, inc. 15 'suitcase' ones and broader generator provision.
- 258 British Red Cross deployments.

1-year SROI				5-year SROI			
Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI	Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI
£552.6k	£1.2m	£640.7k	£1.16	£552.6k	£1.2m	£640.7k	£1.16

## Stakeholder outcomes of initiatives 1-6

- 198.2k+ PSM Welcome Packs sent to new or renewing PSM customers
- 34.9% increase in customers supported by a personalised PSM service during a power cut
- 85.6% PSM customers restored to power within six hours (LV faults)
- 23% increase in direct sign-ups to

- the PSM thanks to our rebrand in response to stakeholder feedback
- Set stretch targets to reach 70% of eligible high-risk customers with PSM recruitment
- 96k+ total outbound PSM contacts related to interruptions (117% increase)
- Full Resilient Homes programme

- designed to increase domestic resilience from 2022, with 30 batteries ordered for a pilot programme in vulnerable households, bringing benefits to those who need them most, first
- Plans in place to deliver fuel cost-saving opportunities for 30 customers in 2022

# Fuel Poverty



In previous years there have been about 430k+ households in our region living in acute fuel poverty, but this year our extensive research and data modelling with Experian demonstrates that fuel poverty will more than double across the region to affect more than 1m households – meaning many more families will be choosing between ‘heating and eating’. Our focus in 2021-22 was to scale the geographical coverage of

our direct support services, reaching 7.8k individuals annually through expanding our Citizens Advice partnerships, delivering energy advice hubs in partnership with Utilita to two



areas of significant income deprivation and piloting delivery of energy-saving packs to 500 hard-to-reach households. We will reach a further 179k+ households through education, communication and awareness raising.

Here we share details of some of our 2021-22 fuel poverty initiatives and our plans to continue expansion and roll-out of fuel poverty support.

## Increasing direct intervention to significantly expand our support in response to the energy crisis

### 1. Scaling our fuel poverty intervention programme to cover 100% of the region

**Stakeholders told us:** to target the expansion of our fuel poverty work in the areas that need it most.

**So we:** enhanced our partnership with Citizens Advice in West Yorkshire and the North East, funding six energy advisors, supporting 3.7k customers over 12 months by offering bespoke tariff switching, direct debit management, meter-reading advice and signposting to services such as Green Doctor. We also expanded our Powergrid Care programme by partnering with Citizens Advice in South Yorkshire and the Humber Estuary (the third- and fourth-highest areas of vulnerability in our region), and partnered with Energy Saving Trust to offer a telephony service across the

whole region, ensuring that everyone can access and benefit from the support programmes we offer. This expansion programme includes support for 120 Deaf/BSL users across both areas.

**Next, we plan to:** begin a pilot in 2023 to support 100% of the region through direct interventions by late 2023.

“While we already reach a significant number of vulnerable client groups, we believe that the Northern Powergrid partnership will increase our capacity and capability to reach even more people in fuel poverty.”

Citizens Advice – Hull and East Ridings

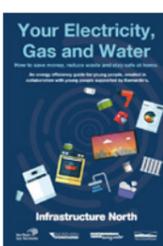
1-year SROI				5-year SROI			
Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI	Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI
£550.6k	£1.3m	£763.1k	£1.39	£550.5k	£1.9m	£1.4m	£2.50

### 2. Partnering with Utilita on energy efficiency help in areas of significant fuel poverty

**Stakeholders told us:** to offer more face-to-face support to those who needed additional support because of the energy crisis.

**So we:** began working with Utilita, a national specialist energy provider for low-income homes to support the creation of two new hubs in Huddersfield, Yorkshire, and Hartlepool, Co. Durham, areas of significant fuel poverty. The hubs will support all customers in the area with advice, tariff information and energy efficiency products, aiming to reach as many people in fuel poverty as possible. We also set up a programme to temporarily switch meters for Utilita pre-payment smart-meter customers who had the potential to be adversely impacted by a software update – ensuring energy access for those at risk.

**Next, we plan to:** open the Utilita hubs in summer 2022. Through them, we can reach an estimated 90% more people. We have also shared our social indicator mapping data to Utilita to help them with their planning of the new hubs’ locations.



**Stakeholders told us:** to support more hard-to-reach families through the energy crisis and scale up support for families at risk of fuel poverty.

**So we:** enhanced our partnership with Barnardo’s to support 500 families who fall into the lowest income deprivation rating. This links families with our existing support programmes, including Citizens Advice, to optimise financial benefits to the families as well as delivering practical energy efficiency advice

and support to reduce their energy bills, including distributing energy-saving packs to all 500 families. These packs contained practical items to reduce energy bills, such as LED bulbs, foil reflectors and draft excluders. We also focused on helping households to access grants to improve the EPC rating of their homes, through Green Doctor home visits.

**Next, we plan to:** support partners and communities to lift 100% of homes in our region to rating D, through targeted intervention efforts and by replicating the Barnardo’s pilot in the North East and wider. Our region has a high prevalence of poor EPC-rated homes, with 8% higher than the national average of homes rated D or below, meaning they are inefficient to heat and create bigger energy bills.

## 4. Delivering BPEC Energy Efficiency Training across 100% of our region, as part of our Nobody Left Behind strategy

**Stakeholders told us:** front-line workers need training to help support those in fuel poverty. Plus, buildings need to become more energy efficient, so that more money is available to spend on initiatives that benefit the community.

**So we:** partnered with NGN to fund British Plumbing Employers Council (BPEC) Energy Efficiency Training as a pilot in 2019. This delivers fuel poverty

training courses to front-line workers, including housing associations, LAs, charities and grassroots organisations. This year we enhanced the programme, taking delivery online and increasing attendance at each session from 12 to 40. Courses included guidance on what Green Doctor can deliver in terms of in-home interventions, increasing team member knowledge of when to refer, and how to advise those in fuel poverty

as to what support is available. We also funded Groundwork to deliver Energy Management System surveys of five buildings, benefitting 18k people p.a. across Yorkshire to identify how they could become more energy efficient.

**Next, we plan to:** ensure communities and vulnerable customers are actively supported during the energy crisis, equipping them with skills and capabilities to manage their energy efficiency. This underpins our priority to not leave anyone behind in the energy transition through practical interventions.

1-year SROI				5-year SROI			
Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI	Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI
£10.1k	£77.1k	£67.0k	£6.62	£10.1k	£123.8k	£113.6k	£11.23



## Developing our education and communications campaigns to further our reach for those who need us most

### 5. Using bespoke Audience Engine software to target delivery of vulnerability communications & increase accuracy by 95%

**Stakeholders told us:** to improve our targeted communications regarding educating and supporting vulnerable groups.

**So we:** partnered with Experian to target specific vulnerable customer groups, such as the elderly and rurally isolated, at a household level through

its bespoke Audience Engine (AE) software, which we plan to use to tailor our communications to deliver messaging with up to 95% accuracy. We also developed a series of educational short videos in partnership with our Future Fairness Panel, covering topics including net zero advice, energy efficiency actions and how to navigate

the shift to electric vehicles. This has reached over 500k views on our social media channels.

**Next, we plan to:** continue to develop our campaigns and collateral to support vulnerable customers, using Audience Engine to target those most in need.

### 6. Working with utility peers to deliver a coordinated approach to fuel poverty advice during the cost-of-living crisis

**Stakeholders told us:** to ensure fuel poverty information was coordinated across all relevant utilities and agencies.

**So we:** worked with our Infrastructure North partners – a cross-utility northern agency comprising us, NGN, Yorkshire Water and Northumbrian Water – to deliver coordinated ‘no cost’ information about energy- and water saving and bill reduction to 3m people via a leaflet and video. Working with Barnardo’s, the leaflet was updated to be more appealing and accessible to young people, and the advice updated in partnership with Energy Saving Trust (EST). The leaflet was put online for 300k families and young people

supported by Barnardo’s, and hard copies delivered to 12.4k households.

**Next, we plan to:** enable more people to benefit from this advice by targeting all households with children in our region, through an expansion of the channels and community partners who are able to reach the most hard-to-reach communities. Our target date is 2023.

“Without this partnership with Northern Powergrid those most vulnerable and at risk would not have been aware of the advice needed to support them with their needs daily and in an emergency.”

Christina Saunders-Wingfield, Children Service Manager, Barnardo’s

1-year SROI				5-year SROI			
Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI	Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI
£3.9k	£64.0k	£60.1k	£15.51	£3.9k	£121.5k	£117.7k	£30.37

### Stakeholder outcomes of initiatives 1-6:

“I’m a church warden and shared the printed version with my elderly church members which was much appreciated and provided valuable information they would not otherwise be able to access.”

Customer feedback on our energy efficiency email

- Customers supported with bespoke fuel poverty advice across the four areas with the highest level of customer vulnerability
- 500 energy-saving packs delivered to families with the lowest income deprivation rating
- At least 50 homes to receive a Green Doctor visit and energy-saving help
- Citizens Advice and Energy Saving Trust referrals for 500 families with lowest income deprivation rating to access optional support
- BPEC Energy Efficiency Training for 20 front-line Barnardo’s colleagues via Green Doctor
- 200 additional referrals to Green Doctor

# Nobody Left Behind



Ensuring a socially inclusive, fair and equitable transition, we continue to work with our partnership network to identify, understand and support hard-to-reach customers. We systematically review, refresh and assure our communications and

services to ensure that they are accessible. This year, our focus was on translating our Nobody Left Behind approach into tangible actions and deliverables driven by understanding of vulnerable and wider customer needs, achieving this through research

and engagement to increase the scale and depth of our understanding, alongside continued development of decarbonisation services for all. Here, we outline our 2021-22 work through several real-world case studies, and share our future ambitions.

## 1. Delivering in-depth insight to tailor future services through engagement & research

**Stakeholders told us:** to listen to all voices to develop practical tools and guidance that reflect the differing needs of our communities, and learn from existing good practice.

decarbonisation advocates for our communities. We developed a 14-day online forum with 20 participants aged 18-21 to gather their insight and shape future content.

**Next, we plan to:** co-create the programme for delivery with the Future Fairness Panel and SIEG to develop the model for decarbonisation community advocates. We'll share the results of the research with partners to aid the development of new business models and capacity-building initiatives to educate and inform communities as to where they can seek targeted support.

**So we:** commissioned four separate pieces of research with a mixed demographic, including age, gender, region, urban versus rural, students, working, apprentices, bill and non-bill payers, to help understand the differing attitudes to climate change and the energy transition in families, in relation to vulnerabilities, for future customers, insight and best practice across the UK to shape our tools and approach:

**C. Communicating decarbonisation to vulnerable customers.** Ten one-hour interviews with customers experiencing age-related, financial and physical vulnerabilities, to gather their understanding of net zero, and to test our materials to improve their effectiveness with this demographic.



**D. Desktop research.** A review of existing practice and pilots, customer research projects and surveys in this area, such as those from fellow DNOs, gas networks, Ofgem, Citizens Advice and Nesta, to help us focus service developments and determine what could be piloted and where gaps exist.

**We can't assume customers understand net zero. It's important to provide baseline explanations before talking about more complex topics, and Northern Powergrid must become a trusted authoritative voice.**

**A. Intergenerational Insight.** What will decarbonisation mean for our communities? Co-creation forums with eight three-generation families, across 15 locations in our region.

**B. Future Consumers.** Our future customers are vital to shape our approach, and act as

Boxclever research advice

## 2. Collaborating with partners to develop Nobody Left Behind initiatives, a practical toolkit, & pilot series

**Stakeholders told us:** our Future Fairness and Citizens Panels asked us to introduce new service partners to deliver decarbonisation and energy efficiency advice as part of our practical delivery of our Nobody Left Behind model.

**So we:** developed a programme of regional online workshops to increase our partners and our partnership network. The focus of this practical programme is to build the capacity and capability to support our customers in vulnerable situations on their journey to decarbonisation.

This programme is 'Bridging the Gaps to support our customers', 'Better Together', and 'Nobody Left Behind', which develops the practical skills of our partnership network – improving working practices with charities and community organisations, helping them to identify who is most at risk of being left behind, and how we can target support for the differing needs of these groups.

**Next, we plan to:** roll out the resulting practical tool kit and regional pilots with differing models to assess which have the greatest impact aligned to vulnerability and community need.

## 3. Developing advice & education services to support vulnerable customers through the energy transition

**Stakeholders told us:** domestic, vulnerable and future customers didn't fully understand that they had a role to play in the energy transition – many thought it would all be taken care of for them. They wanted education on what it really meant, and for challenges to be explained using videos, quizzes, podcasts, gamification to make messages quick and easy to understand. They also wanted us to be clear about financial benefits.

**So we:** continued our work with Energy Saving Trust to promote the Home Energy Efficiency Tool, which asks a few questions about a customer's home, fills in gaps using data and models all possible combinations to deliver a tailored action plan identifying the most cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable investment solutions.

**Next, we plan to:** develop our fully accessible bespoke net zero education hub, where customers can access tailored net zero advice and communications and self-refer for programmes such as Green Doctor and Citizens Advice.



## 4. Increasing decarbonisation education programme targets to reach 8k more of the next generation

**Stakeholders and our research told us:** the influence of our future customers as advocates and influencers for decarbonisation action and introducing energy efficiency measures should not be underestimated. Our current education programmes are vital and should be scaled up to include education and actions to measure and take actions to address decarbonisation at a family and community level.

We also ran our successful Energy Heroes programme for the sixth year, with schools workshops to help children to understand how they can make energy savings and support for schools to run events to engage their wider community. This included a 'hub club' to plan and deliver an energy-saving campaign for the community, including letters and leaflets to local businesses,

invitations for local MPs, and creative displays in community centres and libraries.

**Next, we plan to:** set a programme of collaborative working with the Ahead partnership to build on the success of the Energy Heroes project to future-proof and develop the materials and approach of this delivery partnership.

**So we:** increased our 2023-28 education targets to reach 4k children and focused the programme on decarbonisation, commissioning proposals for a programme of work beginning this pilot year. We will report on this in next year's SECV submission.

1-year SROI				5-year SROI			
Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI	Total cost	Gross benefit, PV	NPV	SROI
£37k	£96.5k	£59.5k	£1.61	£37k	£135.3k	£98.3k	£2.66

## Stakeholder outcomes for initiatives 1-4:

- Developed an action plan to identify barriers, challenges and solutions around vulnerability and decarbonisation, which will be put into place in 2022-23
- Developed community partnering events to identify support at a regional level
- Worked with Centre for Sustainable Energy to develop an ecosystem of partners to address the barriers identified
- Established internal-external support groups to develop and deliver the plan
- Created a reporting framework to ensure transparency and accountability to meet our goals
- Educated 50 partners and 130 potential partners on vulnerability support

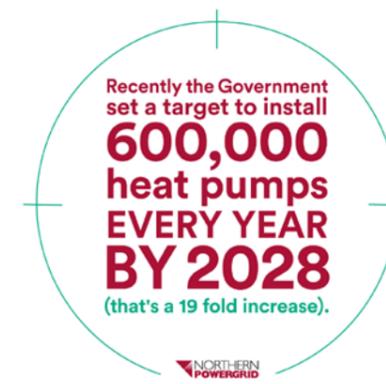


- Identified eight support programmes for collaboration
- Worked with Energy Saving Trust and customers to prepare an education hub due for launch in spring 2022
- Promoted a Home Energy Efficiency Tool to 3m customers, with potential benefits such as aiding customer recall through

- the provision of memorable and impactful advice and potential customer-bill savings of £86 per person
- Reached 4k children annually via a schools programme providing decarbonisation advice
- Supported 90 children in STEM through 2022 pilot programme

## Supporting increased energy education

In a previous SECV year we created an easy-to-digest video series to explain and demystify energy for customers, with topics including 'What is... electric heating?' and 'What is... net zero?' This year, we focused on increasing the reach and impact of the series, which was viewed over 8.3k times in 2021-22.





**Follow us on Twitter:**

@powergridnews

**Follow us on Facebook:**

@northernpowergrid

**Email us at:**

[yourpowergrid@northernpowergrid.com](mailto:yourpowergrid@northernpowergrid.com)

**Write to us at:**

Stakeholder Relations  
Northern Powergrid  
98 Aketon Road  
Castleford  
West Yorkshire  
WF10 5DS