

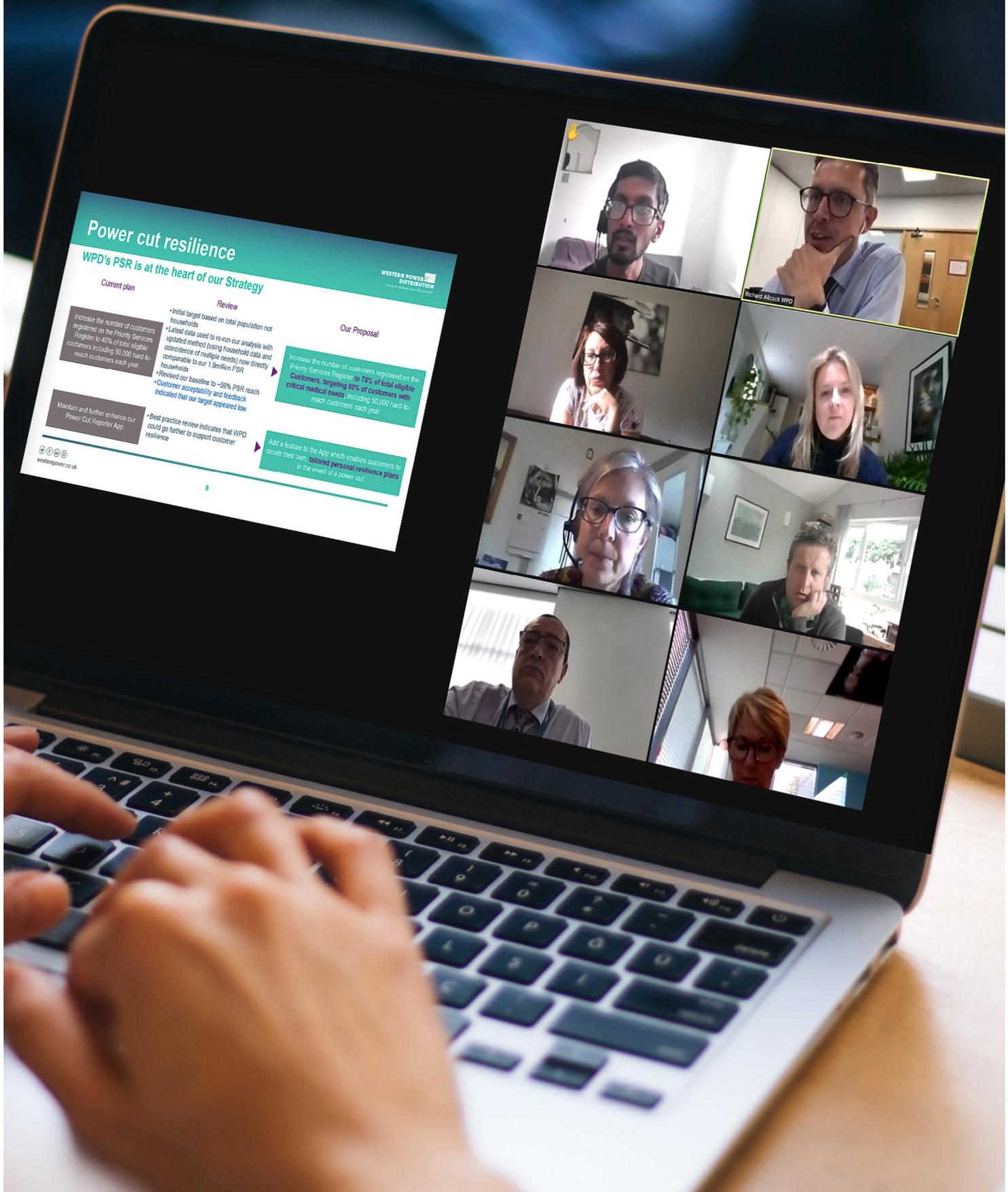


Part Three Submission

Consumer vulnerability outcomes

Ofgem Stakeholder Engagement &
Consumer Vulnerability Incentive
2021/22

Stakeholder Engagement and Social Obligations Manager Richard Allcock discussing our customer vulnerability strategy at an online workshop



Power cut resilience

WPD's PSR is at the heart of our Strategy

WESTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION
Energy & Services since 1882

Current plan

Increase the number of customers registered on the Priority Services Register to 40% of total eligible customers including 50,000 hard-to-reach customers each year.

Maintain and further enhance our Power Out Reporter App

Review

- Initial target based on total population not households
- Latest data used to re-run our analysis with updated method (using household data and coincidence of multiple needs) now directly comparable to our 1.9million PSR households
- Reviewed our baseline to ~50% PSR reach
- Customer acceptability and feedback indicated that our target appeared low

Best practice review indicates that WPD could go further to support customer resilience

Our Proposal

Increase the number of customers registered on the Priority Services Register to 75% of total eligible customers, targeting 80% of customers with critical medical needs, including 50,000 hard-to-reach customers each year.

Add a feature to the App which enables customers to create their own, tailored personal resilience plans in the event of a power cut

Welcome

Western Power Distribution (WPD) is the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) responsible for delivering electricity to 8 million customers across the East and West Midlands, South West England and South Wales.

This is Western Power Distribution's Part Three submission to Ofgem's Stakeholder Engagement & Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) Incentive for the regulatory year 2021/22.

2021/22 is the seventh year of the eight year Business Plan period called RII0-ED1. This stands for:

**Revenue = Incentives + Innovation + Outputs
(Electricity Distribution 1)**

It is the regulatory framework introduced by Ofgem and is designed to drive clear outcomes and benefits for consumers, and provide companies with strong incentives to step up and meet the challenges of delivering a low carbon, sustainable energy sector.

Ofgem's SECV Incentive is an annual scheme, which encourages network companies to engage proactively with stakeholders in order to anticipate their needs and deliver a consumer focused, socially responsible and sustainable energy service.

WPD's submission to this incentive is divided into three parts:

Part 1

WPD's stakeholder engagement & consumer vulnerability strategies and key evidence (demonstrating that we meet Ofgem's minimum requirements).

Part 2

Key outcomes resulting from WPD's stakeholder engagement activities.

Part 3

Key outcomes resulting from WPD's consumer vulnerability activities.

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KEY:

The focus throughout this submission is on positive outcomes, delivered by activities which fall in to one of two categories:



New

New, innovative actions, delivered for the first time



Enhanced

Where initiatives have been successful, we have expanded and/or embedded them

1. Introduction



This year we have seen the worst storms in 30 years across our region - with more than half a million customers affected over a single weekend. Our ability to provide tailored assistance in these circumstances, including proactively contacting

1.6 million Priority Services Register (PSR) customers ahead of the storms, is only possible because of our relentless, year-round efforts to maintain accurate data, extend our PSR reach and support the individual needs of our customers.

This focus underpins the development of innovative new services to ensure the net zero transition works for all. We don't just want to protect customers and avoid potential disadvantages - we will ensure they can play a key role in, and benefit from, a smart energy network. We are already well underway in delivering a step change to our support, ready to offer 600,000 customers annually a bespoke Smart Energy Action Plan.

It has been a difficult year for many customers, with a surge in wholesale energy prices and the lasting impacts of Covid-19 contributing to a cost of living crisis which has pushed more people than ever into fuel poverty. Affordability has never been more important. For WPD this means delivering exceptional value for money at all times, but also providing meaningful, lasting benefits for customers in vulnerable situations who are struggling to pay their bills.

Our innovative fuel poverty programme has achieved record savings this year, helping 25,928 customers to save more than £14.6 million. This is made possible by an enduring network of trusted, expert partners, whose local relationships and deep knowledge of vulnerability enhances the breadth and depth of our delivery. We have an unrivalled track record in this area, which we have rapidly adapted in response to the pandemic and

global energy price rises. Ongoing engagement with stakeholders and partners, who share our determination to turn talking into action, drives continual improvement and ensures we achieve significant outcomes and benefits for an increasing range of needs.

As affordability concerns intensify over the coming year, I am confident this approach will be key to continually enhancing our delivery and developing new, innovative customer services.

There has never been a more important time for organisations to take on wider responsibility and engagement in the communities they serve. I am extremely proud that we were the first DNO to publish a Social Contract, bringing together our efforts to deliver far-reaching social and environmental impact for our communities within a single strategy. We have been delivering on these principles for many years, and our Social Contract is already driving even greater ambition. Building on the support we provided to 565,000 people during the pandemic, our new, shareholder-funded Community Matters Fund has provided targeted support and training to grassroots organisations this year, helping an additional 29,000 people struggling to pay their bills to save £2.1 million. We are using our expertise and partnerships to maximise the impact of every pound spent.

The flexibility of our long-standing customer vulnerability strategy has proven effective time and again, leading to excellent, measurable outcomes for the people we serve. We are building our capabilities to support the increasing number of customers that need our help, while at the same time ensuring they can enjoy the benefits of a smart, low carbon future.

Alison Sleightholm
Regulatory and External Affairs Director
and WPD's Vulnerability Champion

Key outcomes delivered

£14.6m

highest ever annual savings for 25,928 fuel poor customers

4.3 million

PSR customers proactively contacted

149 referral partners contributed to

52,382

direct PSR sign-ups

Enduring Community Matters Fund saved 29,000 customers

£2.1m

Strategic outcomes for 2021/22

Extensive and enduring engagement with customer vulnerability experts and wider stakeholders enables us to continually refresh our understanding of the challenges facing customers and co-create stretching action plans to address them. Our strategy (see section 2) provides a robust framework to meet our stakeholders' priorities, ensuring we utilise our resources and expertise to deliver effective support in a range of new contexts.

This submission is structured around four strategic outcomes, agreed with our stakeholders. Crucially, in relation to each outcome, it sets out the considerable positive impacts we have achieved for our customers in 2021/22:

| Tactical priorities | Strategic outcomes |
|--|--|
| Customer resilience and support during the worst storms in three decades. | 1. Customers in vulnerable situations received effective support, tailored to their individual needs - regardless of the operating conditions. This was enabled by accurate and up to date PSR data, expanded PSR reach and enhanced staff training. |
| Enduring impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. | 2. Learnings from the delivery of greater breadth and depth of support during Covid-19 restrictions have been embedded to meet customers' enduring needs. |
| Energy transition to net zero must deliver benefits for all. | 3. We have built the confidence, capabilities and routes of access for our customers so that they are not just safeguarded and protected, but are principle players and beneficiaries of the smart energy transition - a transition that works for all. |
| Cost of living crisis driving more customers into fuel poverty. | 4. We have lifted more people than ever out of fuel poverty, achieving more than the rest of the industry combined since 2015. We have done so via holistic, tailored fuel poverty services that have achieved meaningful, long-lasting benefits. |

2. Customer vulnerability strategy

WPD's enduring customer vulnerability strategy has been updated annually with stakeholders over the last eight years. We share decision making power with them and regularly co-create new strategic commitments. While the longevity of our strategy ensures it is well understood by everyone at WPD, its flexibility has enabled us to adapt effectively to emerging challenges. This is facilitating greater ambition and reach, ready for RII0-ED2, in line with our stakeholders' expectations and Ofgem's four customer vulnerability principles. Our strategy is outlined in detail in Part One, section 2, but summarised below:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Core mission |  Priority Services Register (PSR) Maintain an accurate PSR and work continuously to expand its reach to deliver support and build resilience for customers in vulnerable situations. Use the PSR as a foundation to deliver wider support beyond power cut resilience. |
| Key principles |  Continually improve our understanding of vulnerability |
| Delivery approach |  Improve PSR accuracy  Improve power cut resilience  Address fuel poverty  Energy transition works for all  Embed Covid-19 support |
| Delivery approach |  Work in collaboration with others |
| Delivery approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSR data cleanse Referral networks Data sharing with utilities Proactive contact Embedded approach with staff PSR promotion End-to-end support Tackle root causes Targeted support One-stop-shop with holistic interventions Understand barriers and opportunities Scale up successful pilots Share learning Adapt support Build community resilience with targeted funding |

Stakeholders have led us to prioritise collaboration with trusted local experts rather than delivering services independently. This is exemplified by our fuel poverty programme (see 7.1), which uses a hub model to provide tailored support. Expert stakeholders and delivery partners tell us this works - driving significantly better outcomes for our customers, who benefit from broader and deeper interventions than if WPD acted alone. Our fuel poverty partnership model, shown below, underpins our approach to new challenges, ensuring every initiative delivers the greatest possible impact:



3. Measuring our impact

We must provide services that deliver value to our customers, specifically customers in vulnerable situations who may require more support. Social return on investment (SROI) allows us to quantify the benefits we provide beyond the financial savings, including broader social impacts such as improved health or reduced stress.

We have started embedding this approach through the work done to measure the social value of our RII0-ED2 Business Plan commitments. This included being

the first DNO to fully measure the social impact of our complete vulnerability strategy, setting the standard that other DNOs are now being encouraged to meet.

Using the agreed DNO social value framework described in Part One, 11 of our vulnerable customer initiatives have been independently assessed to identify the social value they deliver.

This provides us vital insights to evaluate our initiatives and support our decision making. We use the findings in

combination with previous experience, Willingness-to-Pay research and the qualitative feedback we receive from different groups of customers and stakeholders to improve and prioritise our activities year on year.

Based on the 11 initiatives measured, our vulnerability and fuel poverty activities delivered £6.08 of social value in 2021/22 on top of every pound invested. The table below summarises the costs, gross social value benefits and SROI across the key outcomes in Part Three:

| Initiatives | Total cost | Direct financial benefits for customers | Societal and environmental benefits | Efficiency savings - leading to customer bill savings | SROI |
|---|------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|-------|
| PSR support during power cuts | £743,703 | £0 | £1,691,006 | £705,537 | £2.22 |
| Fuel poverty support* | £1,554,472 | £14,368,217 | £1,084,660 | £0 | £8.94 |
| Community and innovation funding** | £579,476 | £2,524,134 | £451** | £0 | £3.36 |

*Includes Hope4U, core fuel poverty schemes, Power Up Smart, Power Up Health, CASS and 'Energy MOT'

**Includes Community Matters Fund, Energy Affordability Fund 2021 and 2022. The focus was on reporting the direct financial savings for individuals supported. Future modelling will allow us to capture and value wider societal benefits.

4. Every PSR customer has individual needs – w

Outcome delivered

This year has seen the worst storms in three decades; in the South West we experienced the most power cuts in a 24 hour period in our history during Storm Eunice, with over 500,000 customers affected. Our capability to ramp up our services during crises is evidence of a robust approach to managing and maintaining an accurate PSR, proactively identifying and engaging with customers, and training staff to support an increasing range of vulnerabilities. This year, we provided quicker and more effective power cut support to more customers in vulnerable situations than ever before.

Storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin: robust PSR management enables tailored support on an unprecedented scale

Outcomes

- As a result of our high quality data, **1.6 million PSR customers** received proactive advice and support ahead of the storms, and **168,450 were proactively contacted** during the storms.
- **13,527** vulnerable customers were offered additional assistance, including catering vehicles, taxi fares and hotel accommodation.
- **821** vulnerable customers were identified and referred to our dedicated PSR teams for additional support.

Our storm response

- Our data engineering team identified every care home in our region, enabling teams to engage and direct resources to prioritise their power restoration.
- We provided food and drinks to PSR customers who had spent a night without power, and identified those facing a second night without power to proactively offer hotel accommodation and taxi fares. Take up was particularly high among those with sleep apnoea masks.
- We contacted 1 million customers via social media and handled 2.3 million web hits.
- Data was provided to local authorities daily to enable targeted support. For example we worked with local authorities to target catering facilities and funded opening local fire stations in Cornwall to provide hot drinks and power to charge devices.

We have consistently delivered tailored support and shown why it is so vital, with highly-skilled teams serving individual customer needs while carrying out two-months' worth of repairs and customer contacts in only two days. None of this would have been possible without our year-round efforts to improve the reach and accuracy of the PSR, upskill employees and tailor our services, which are detailed in this section.

Social value

- **£2.22** social value delivered in 2021/22 on top of every £1 spent on PSR support for vulnerable customers during power cuts. Driven by high-quality PSR data, and enabled by the activities outlined in this section.
- **£2.4 million** benefits for customers in 2021/22.

4.1 Vulnerability training drives bespoke, high impact support for customers

Objective: use our continually evolving understanding of vulnerability to provide tailored support when it is most needed

Outcomes

- WPD remains the **top-scoring DNO** for customer satisfaction across RII0-ED1, scoring **over 9/10 for the last four years**.
- **73% of customer calls handled by 'ramp up' staff** during storms in 2022.
- **Call handlers better able to support customers** following our mental health training.

Why

Stakeholders and customers agree our primary focus must be to deliver effective support for customers when they need it most - during power cuts. Social value research and vulnerability workshops have enabled stakeholders to shape our action plans to improve communications before and during power cuts. Quarterly reporting

to our Customer Panel allowed members to monitor our delivery in this area, further enhancing WPD's industry leading performance.

How we delivered

- We expanded our pool of additional 'ramp-up' call takers to 284 staff, who received vulnerability training ahead of the storms. They all now have equipment to support customers from home, when previously, storms may have prevented them from going to offices.
- ✓ We introduced a new, dedicated internal support line for 'ramp-up' staff, with an experienced advisor assisting with calls to customers in more challenging situations. This ensures customers receive the same quality of support and expert guidance from staff, including 'ramp-up' staff who don't interact with PSR customers as frequently as our Contact Centre teams.

Collaboration

- We engaged expert organisations to ensure training for Contact Centre staff covers an increasing number of specific needs, including support for customers with: sight or hearing loss, dementia, Parkinson's disease, oxygen therapy, dialysis machines and mental health issues.
- ✓ Acting on insights from customers with epilepsy, we delivered bespoke training for all Contact Centre staff to enhance their understanding and empathy on this issue.
- ✓ We are implementing bereavement support training with Marie Curie, driven by Contact Centre staff and fuel poverty partners supporting higher volumes of bereaved customers since the beginning of the pandemic.

4.2 UK's 'work from home' culture brings new customer expectations for planned interruptions

Objective: reduce the negative impact of planned power outages for customers

Outcomes

- **New planned interruption website** helps customers to be more resilient to a power cut.
- **More than 1,200 customers** have signed up to receive additional information on planned interruptions from our new text notification service.
- **170 PSR customers benefited** from having an outage planned in daylight hours rather than being affected in the dark.

Why

In the pursuit of continual improvement, we acted on feedback from customers. They asked for contact by text, as planned interruption notification letters can be forgotten by the time works take place - leading to confusion and frustration. This was reinforced by responses to Ofgem's customer satisfaction survey, encouraging us to do more to communicate planned works, particularly in light of increased home working.

How we delivered

- ✓ We developed a new planned

interruption website, containing specific PSR information, videos and leaflets, which has seen 140,130 hits since June.

- ✓ In addition to receiving a letter about upcoming planned work, we send text message reminders ahead of the day, signposting additional information on our website, providing contact details and confirming we have sent a letter containing further information.
- ✓ We reduced outages planned during darker winter hours by 13% compared to winter 2020/21, reducing disruption for customers.

cater for them all in real time

149

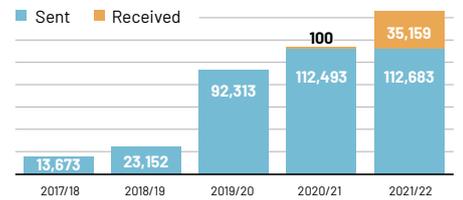
referral partner agencies - a
26% increase

147,842

records shared with
water companies

4.3 million
proactive PSR contacts

Total records shared with water companies



4.3 Our most accurate PSR ever has delivered significant, real world impacts for customers

Objective: continually improve the reach and accuracy of our PSR

Outcomes

- Our PSR now supports **1.9 million customers**, a **50% increase** since 2015/16.
- Improved data accuracy led to **proactive contact within 12 minutes** on average for PSR customers in a power cut, compared to 48 minutes two years ago.
- **2.7 million proactive PSR contacts** to update their records and offer advice and wider support.
- **16.9% of PSR records updated.**
- **112,683 records shared** with six water companies, taking us to over **354,000 records shared** since 2017/18.
- Pioneering two-way data sharing enabling **35,159 records to be received** from two water companies.

Why

Stakeholders at our topic-specific workshops co-created our approach to maintaining and improving our PSR. They drove greater ambition, with a clear

message that expanding the reach of the PSR, towards an eventual target of at least 75%, is a priority.

How we delivered

We have made more than eight million proactive contacts to PSR customers since 2015 meaning our data quality has never been better - but there is more to do. We have:

→ Proactively contacted 1,794,278 PSR customers to update their data, offer advice and refer them to our fuel poverty services, and 976,927 to offer support during power cuts.

✓ Collaborated with UK DNOs to achieve a common understanding of PSR eligibility and reach. Our updated methodology accounts for household vulnerability - understanding how circumstances may combine or overlap. This has improved the accuracy of our PSR coverage and enabled us to better target outreach.

→ Increased the proportion of proactive data cleanse contacts made by text to

customers with a registered mobile phone number, driving higher response rates.

Collaboration

→ Our ambition is to achieve a single PSR for energy and water. We were the first DNO to trial two-way data sharing and are collaborating to devise an industry-wide solution. Our data sharing is now well-established. We share records with six water companies, have two-way agreements with two water companies and are establishing arrangements with two more.

→ Learnings from our data sharing trials have informed the PSR Data Sharing Project Steering Group, a water and energy industry collaboration developing a common PSR platform.

✓ We participated in a 'PSR sprint' led by Northumbrian Water, bringing together water and energy companies to design a centralised data-sharing hub.

4.4 WPD achieves our greatest PSR reach thanks to targeted, ongoing collaboration

Objective: increase PSR registration among customers who are harder to reach by traditional promotion activities

Outcomes

- **PSR reach is now 61.5%** of eligible households.
- **149 active referral partners** contributed to **52,382 direct PSR sign-ups**.
- **85,000 customers reached** by promoting the PSR on hospital radio stations and magazines.
- **New social indicator map filters** enable partners to target skills gaps and broaden access.

Why

We strive to register all eligible customers on the PSR. Deliberative engagement with our Customer Panel and future customer forums pushed us to increase our efforts, with customers feeding back that some people may be more isolated or harder to reach due to Covid-19. Expert stakeholders urged us to build on our successful partnership model and expand the breadth of our referral partner network, targeting specific organisations who interact with hard-to-reach customers.

How we delivered

We use every opportunity to promote the benefits of becoming a referral partner, for example when engaging at local and national vulnerability forums (e.g. the Welsh government's Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel). This has led to huge

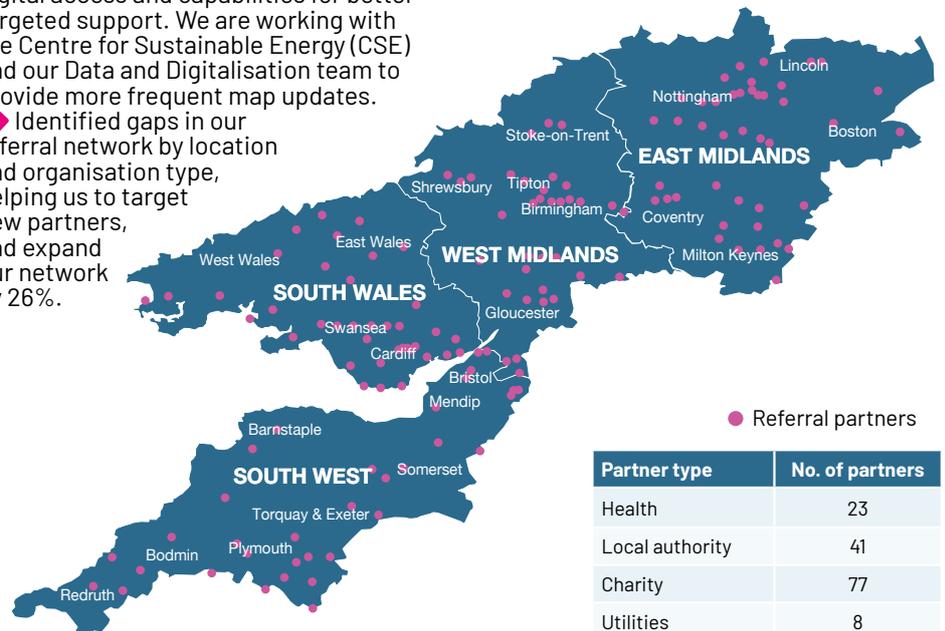
growth in our referral network from 23 partners in 2015/16 to 149 in 2021/22. This initiative reaches customers with specific needs, who may not interact with WPD's general PSR promotion but would benefit from our services. This year we:

→ Refreshed and expanded our social indicator mapping, with our updated PSR reach methodology and filters to identify digital access and capabilities for better targeted support. We are working with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and our Data and Digitalisation team to provide more frequent map updates.

→ Identified gaps in our referral network by location and organisation type, helping us to target new partners, and expand our network by 26%.

Collaboration

→ We promoted the PSR through hospital radio and magazines, hospice outreach and Dance for Parkinson's events. We partnered with Bristol Water and Wessex Water to distribute 58,000 prescription bags for local pharmacies and 1,000 tech wristbands for dementia patients via Avon and Somerset Police.



5. Lessons from Covid-19 drive wider benefits for

Outcome delivered

Two years on from the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, our customers are still feeling its effects. New vulnerabilities have emerged and underlying issues have been exacerbated and revealed for the first time. Thanks to enduring links with our communities, forged over more than a decade of partnership and collaborative delivery, we responded decisively and effectively to achieve vital impacts for customers. Recognising the many challenges they still face, we have embedded lessons from the pandemic into our long term strategies, leading to more holistic benefits for those in fuel poverty and wider social value for our communities.

5.1 More than half a million people have benefited from our Community Matters Fund so far

Objective: improve community resilience by adapting our expertise and funding to address emerging social challenges

Outcomes

- Building on the support we delivered for **565,000 people** during the pandemic, this year the first wave of our **Community Matters Fund has benefited 29,000 people** facing fuel poverty, to save **£2.1 million** on their energy bills.
- **20 of the supported organisations also benefitted from training, networking and resources** from one of WPD's expert fuel poverty partners, driving consistent, high quality advice for customers.
- **24 funding recipients have joined our referral partner network** as a direct result of this fund, delivering enduring benefits for our communities.

Social value

- **£3.20** social value delivered in 2021/22 on top of every £1 spent in our Community Matters Fund.
- **£2.1 million** benefits for customers in 2021/22.

Why

We have engaged with a range of stakeholders, including future customers and a sub-group of our Customer Panel, specifically to co-develop our Social Contract (see Part Two, 4.1).

Stakeholder feedback was clear that WPD's Social Contract must move beyond a traditional corporate social responsibility model to ensure we are proactive in community change and deliver enduring, positive outcomes for customers. We have therefore partnered with stakeholders to determine the level of ambition for our community fund and plan its delivery, taking into account some stakeholders' reservations about whether customer money should go towards community funding initiatives.

How we delivered

Just 10 days after the first UK Covid-19 lockdown announcement, we set up our 'In This Together - Community Matters' fund, supporting community organisations in our region to help those in need.

We worked closely with our expert Customer Panel to devise assessment criteria for the funding applications, to ensure we maximised the positive outcome of every pound spent. Across three rounds of funding, we engaged with different stakeholder groups to

ensure a wide range of organisations were considered, including inviting MPs to nominate good causes in their constituencies. Over the year, we provided £1 million of funding to 871 local organisations providing services to those in vulnerable situations and isolation, key workers and those struggling with the financial impacts of the pandemic.

This benefited over 565,000 vulnerable people who received additional support and care in a time of huge anxiety and disruption.

Our experience delivering this funding demonstrated the huge value of targeted financial support administered via local groups, who are best placed to understand and assist their communities. Stakeholders urged us to build on this strong track record to provide specific support in WPD's areas of expertise.

Therefore, in 2021/22 we:

- ✓ Published our first Social Contract, including a commitment to an annual £1 million 'Community Matters Fund' for local organisations, fully financed by WPD's shareholders.
- ✓ Partnered with our Customer Panel and wider stakeholders to co-create the funding focus areas, leveraging existing partnerships and expertise to maximise benefits for customers. These are: vulnerability and fuel poverty; safety; diversity; low carbon technology (LCT) and energy efficiency; and, education in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

✓ Recognising that soaring energy prices and inflation were pushing many into financial difficulty, the first £500,000 instalment funded 79 organisations supporting fuel poor customers.

✓ Provided training to 20 funding recipients, led by CSE, a long-standing, expert partner in WPD's fuel poverty programme. Training focused on upskilling organisations with the tools and knowledge to recognise signs of fuel poverty and provide effective support. Participants were also offered resources to cascade to their teams for use when supporting customers.

✓ Facilitated networking between groups, so they were able to share expertise and improve outcomes for customers. For example, CSE provided County in the Community with workshop guidance materials based on previous successful events. They range from practical advice about slow cooking and draught proofing, to sessions on understanding energy and developing community energy projects.

✓ Using our social value proxy bank, we estimated that mental health support delivered a net benefit of more than £75 for every pound spent. This enabled us to direct our second round of funding, launched in March 2022, with £500,000 targeting organisations supporting mental health and wellbeing, isolation and loneliness.

➔ Recognising the impact of global energy prices and cost of living concerns, stakeholders led us to expand our fund by £500,000 to £1.5 million this year.

Case study: Community Matters Fund 2021

Groundwork West Midlands received a grant of £9,998 to help the charity run its Green Doctor services, providing and installing energy savings measures in 150 homes saving an estimated £60,410 on their bills. Ensuring benefits for customers are enduring, combined with their £402 bill saving, they are supported to save energy through behavioural changes.

Joanne Elward, Healthy Lifestyle Manager at Groundwork West Midlands, said: **"We're delighted to have received this grant. It will allow us to help local people make real cost savings on their energy bills that will in turn reduce the financial pressures that many people face during the winter months"**.



or customers

Enduring Community Matters Fund saved 29,000 customers

£2.1 million



264 frontline community and healthcare workers trained at 31 events



448 people received one-to-one energy advice via our Energy Affordability Fund



15,681 digitally excluded customers received tailored advice



5.2 Embedded Covid-19 adaptations deliver enduring benefits for hard-to-reach customers

Objective: reduce social isolation and digital exclusion by working with partners to deliver new, innovative outreach solutions

Outcomes

- **Increasing the average time spent supporting customers over the phone** enabled advisors to build relationships with clients and provide more effective support.
- **448 people received one-to-one energy advice** via our Energy Affordability Fund 2021 projects, making savings of **£199,737**.
- **264 frontline community and healthcare workers trained** to identify and support those in fuel poverty via **31 events**.
- **15,681 letters sent** to digitally excluded customers, offering energy efficiency advice.
- **3,002 PSR leaflets distributed**.
- **229 people reached** via online 'energy cafes' and question and answer events.

Social value

- **£5.28** social value delivered in 2021/22 on top of every £1 spent in our Energy Affordability Fund 2021.
- **£199,737** benefits for customers in 2021/22.

Why

Not only has the Covid-19 pandemic caused new vulnerabilities, it has exacerbated existing issues, such as social isolation and digital exclusion.

Fuel poverty delivery partners at our best practice workshops told us the complexity of cases has increased ten-fold, with customers experiencing multiple financial, health and wellbeing challenges simultaneously. At the same time, restrictions and ongoing anxieties about Covid-19 made many customers harder to engage, while the move to online support risks excluding those without digital skills and access.

This was reiterated by stakeholders at our topic-specific workshops, who noted that greater support is needed for vulnerable customers.

It is crucial that WPD continues to provide tailored support for these customers even as pandemic restrictions are lifted - seeking out new approaches to engage with harder to reach customers and providing support that meets their full range of needs.

How we delivered

Understanding the full picture: From April 2020, with energy efficiency measures falling down the agenda for customers facing immediate hardship, we expanded the scope of our fuel poverty projects to provide wider Covid-19 assistance to customers, including wellbeing checks, befriending services, advice for online households and food and prescription deliveries.

Delivering this wider support, we found that the impact of the pandemic had increased complexity and cases required more time to provide effective support. Key learnings were embedded into our long term approach to improve outcomes for customers.

→ Where face to face contact is not possible or preferable, we are spending more time with customers to ensure a holistic view of their circumstances is captured and wider interventions can be delivered. This is enabling our fuel poverty partners to better understand customers' situations, identifying ways of supporting them in addition to typical energy efficiency measures.

→ We have continued to actively look for signs that customers may be lonely or isolated, and supported access to an expanded range of befriending services.

Innovative new approaches: Our Energy Affordability Fund 2021 supported six innovative projects in our region to expand the fuel poverty services available to vulnerable households, with a particular focus on adapting services to Covid-19 restrictions and reaching those most impacted. Activities included:

- Using WPD's social indicator mapping to target communities with high levels of vulnerability, particularly those at risk of fuel poverty and digital exclusion, and those off the gas grid or with poor local transport links.
- Upskilling staff and volunteers to help organisations provide quality support.
- Working with local authorities and housing associations to target mail-outs of energy efficiency advice materials, home energy checklists and PSR information to digitally excluded customers.
- Training health and social care staff on the link between cold, damp homes and poor health.
- Liaison with housing estate managers for vulnerable and older residents, to ensure they can support customers struggling to afford their bills.

- Connecting with a broader pool of community groups to promote the PSR.
- Conducting one-to-one fuel poverty support over the phone and via video calls, covering: engaging with suppliers, fuel debt support, meter issues and readings, water social tariffs, income maximisation and behavioural advice.
- Supporting immediate financial challenges, with measures such as emergency fuel top ups and prepayment meter vouchers.

Case study

Energy Affordability Fund 2021: Working with Exeter Community Energy, we supported 467 customers to save £230,135 on their bills in the past two years (with £15,332 savings delivered for 31 customers in 2021/22).

Of these, 77 cases were particularly complex, requiring in-depth support around hardship, wellbeing, debt and metering issues due to Covid-19. Recruiting an in-house benefits advisor enabled them to provide immediate financial advice to clients, many of whom had experienced a loss of income due to the pandemic. Support was predominantly targeted to those without the internet, who would have visited drop-in venues prior to Covid-19 restrictions. As well as providing in-depth support, they developed key relationships with local organisations - increasing their referral database and securing partnerships with local councils for future collaboration.

They ran 16 training sessions with 122 frontline workers, including Age UK, local housing teams, and hospital and mental health services. Webinars, online 'energy cafes' and advice clinics helped reach council managers, health workers and low income families. They contacted energy pay points to promote fuel poverty services and the PSR to those who regularly top up small amounts. Awareness was raised via local health forums, newsletters and social media.



6. A smart energy transition that works for all

Outcome delivered

We work with our stakeholders to build customers' confidence and capabilities, as well as routes of access so that they are not just safeguarded and protected, but are principle players and beneficiaries of a smart energy transition that works for all. WPD can play a leading role to support customers and enable their participation. This is a responsibility we take very seriously with a range of actions well underway. Stakeholders want support to be impartial, transparent and collaborative - so we are bringing together expert groups to offer customers comprehensive, end-to-end support.

6.1 Granular understanding of the impact of the energy transition for vulnerable customers

Objective: turn 'participation in a smart energy future' from theory into practical delivery

Outcomes

- Smart Energy Choices Tool developed with more than **60 smart energy offers** catalogued for inclusion - ready to be piloted with **130 fuel poverty partners in the next 12 months**.
- **'Smart and Fair?'** advisory board established, bringing together a cross section of industry representatives to inform project outcomes.
- **Extended analytical capabilities** to the whole of Great Britain, enabling improved analysis of datasets to drive decision making for all DNO customers.
- **Directly informed BEIS and Ofgem thinking** on future consumer protection and vulnerable consumer support in a smart energy future, as well as National Grid Electricity System Operator thinking about how to characterise consumers in future system forecasting.
- **Commenced delivery of our Rural Vulnerability Action Plan**, with **26** initiatives tailored to supporting rural customers.

Why

For our stakeholders, a fair and equitable route to net zero remains uncertain. They want WPD to lead the way by coordinating industry experts to deliver clear, impartial guidance for customers and partners.

Local authority stakeholders at topic-specific workshops told us there needs to be a coherent approach to smart energy advice, so people feel confident to participate in low carbon solutions. We must be proactive to identify the barriers facing customers, and work collaboratively with the third sector and local authorities to deliver effective solutions tailored to customer needs. Targeted engagement revealed community energy groups consider themselves well placed to help vulnerable and fuel poor customers - and WPD have a key role to support them.

How we delivered

→ We launched 'Smart and Fair?', an industry-first collaborative initiative with Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks and CSE, identifying practical actions to ensure the transition to a smart, net zero energy system delivers benefits for all. In 2021/22, the programme was presented at COP26, and described as 'excellent work' to build on in the BEIS/Ofgem 2021 Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan.

→ We engaged with 17 fuel poverty delivery partners on 'Smart and Fair?' at our best practice workshop, to inform them about the project learnings and plan effective solutions for customers using the tools developed.

We have:

- Developed a suite of practical analytical tools and datasets to create a working model of the capabilities, barriers and opportunities for customers to participate in a smart energy future. Covering the whole of Great Britain, we now understand how:
 - Different customers are likely to engage in smart energy services.
 - Energy system changes may exacerbate existing, or create new, vulnerabilities for customers, and what interventions could avoid this.
 - DSOs can offer smart energy services specifically for vulnerable customers.
- Begun to test and validate these tools using real world examples from communities participating in current smart energy pilots.
- ✓ Established a smart energy market monitoring programme, to create a database of smart energy offers - including requirements of participants.
- Developed a tool for energy advisors when supporting their clients with smart energy services and tariffs. The 'Smart Energy Choices Tool' builds on the Offer Profiling Tool developed in the first phase of the project, providing up-to-date information, enabling advisors to match clients with suitable smart energy offers.
- ✓ In collaboration with our Data and Digitalisation team, we are making more data available for our Contact Centre teams, helping them triage customer needs to provide more effective, tailored support. This approach, alongside the Smart Energy Choices Tool, are key actions to ensure we are ready to offer 600,000 PSR customers per year bespoke Smart Energy Action Plans from 2023.
- ✓ Used project insights to enhance our tailored communications about the energy transition for different customer types.
- Built a domestic consumer protection framework for smart energy services, linked to the Flex Assure code of conduct and compliance scheme for commercial consumers.
- ✓ Partnered with community energy groups to co-create a new Net Zero Communities Strategy, with a key focus on supporting vulnerable customers. Using 'Smart and Fair?' tools, we identified opportunities to match customers to local community energy schemes and help them to benefit from LCTs via our Smart Energy Action Plans. This has already led to an innovation project, VENICE, working with Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network to find the best ways to engage fuel poor customers.

Why

Rurality is linked to, and can compound, other factors that contribute to vulnerability. Distance from essential services, poor transport links and difficulties accessing support can affect a customer's ability to cope, particularly in a power cut. As the move to net zero creates new opportunities for rural customers, increasing electricity reliance may also pose unique challenges for those in vulnerable situations, therefore requiring targeted WPD support.

Local authorities, community energy groups and parish councillors urged WPD to devise tailored actions for rural customers to increase our PSR reach in these areas and provide wider support on fuel poverty and the net zero transition.

Collaboration

- ✓ In collaboration with four other utility companies, we supported Rural England Network to produce a report exploring the experiences of rural customers in vulnerable situations. It reviewed existing evidence on vulnerability, links between disadvantage and rurality, and analysis of surveys carried out with our PSR customers, voluntary community and social enterprise groups and the public sector.
- ✓ Our priority is always to turn talking into action. We have taken the recommendations of this report and developed an action plan, containing steps to improve the effectiveness of our targeted support for rural PSR customers, and interventions to help them navigate the challenges of decarbonisation.
- ✓ We have begun delivery of this plan, surveying 550 field staff at four of our rural depots to understand the challenges they encounter and share best practice.
- ✓ Working with Cadent Gas and Wales and West Utilities, we are supporting the next phase of Rural England Network's research. The project will locate 'Community Agents' supporting rural residents, and identify opportunities and barriers for these schemes to promote PSR services.



424 customers saved £225k

through our Energy Affordability Fund

Improved PSR service

for rural customers driven by utility collaboration

New Net Zero Communities Strategy

with vulnerable customer focus

Smart Energy Choices Tool

developed to support PSR customers

6.2 Delivery vehicle 1: Energy Affordability Fund 2022 - building vital digital capabilities

Objective: build customers' confidence and competence to use digital services to access the benefits of a smart future

Outcomes

- **424 customers have been supported** to save **£224,508** on their bills.
- **212 signed up to our PSR.**
- **114 frontline workers and community members trained.**
- Supported customers at **63 outreach events**, including pop-up stalls, digital hubs and energy drop in clinics.

Social value

- **£3.72** social value delivered in 2021/22 on top of every £1 spent in our Energy Affordability Fund 2022.
- **£224,959** benefits for customers in 2021/22.

Why

Digital exclusion has been identified by 'Smart and Fair?' as a key barrier to customer take up of LCTs. At our fuel poverty best practice workshop, stakeholders told us to prioritise supporting customers with lower than average skills or access to digital services. Without our intervention, these customers risk being left behind. There can be multiple barriers to getting online - including digital skills, online safety awareness, and access to smart devices and broadband.

Stakeholders don't want WPD to simply safeguard customers and avoid detriment; they want us to lead, and build customer capabilities to unlock substantial benefits - and we agree. We must be proactive, innovative and build entirely new, tailored services and we have already made major progress in the last 12 months.

How we delivered

We made tackling digital exclusion a key requirement of our Energy Affordability Fund 2022 projects, launching innovative new ways to identify and support customers to access information and digital services. We are supporting six projects in 2022 to deliver a range of activities, including:

- ✓ Support to establish fundamental digital skills, such as setting up an email account, browsing the internet safely and accessing entertainment, news and communication apps.
- ✓ Delivering training on digital exclusion for community organisations.
- ✓ Providing energy advice by phone and remote video, enabling customers to access energy efficiency measures and bring down their bills.
- ✓ Establishing five 'Digital Help Hubs' in areas where people cannot access online services, with volunteers supporting customers to use technology.

- ✓ Delivering 32 energy advice clinics at libraries and community centres.
- ✓ Training 24 local energy champions to help customers access information and apply for discounts on their bills.
- ✓ Holding 26 pop-up street stalls in areas of high deprivation where there has been little engagement in the past.
- ✓ Funding devices to be loaned to households alongside digital skills support.
- ✓ Using thermal imaging cameras to survey properties, showing customers where heat loss is occurring.

Collaboration

- ✓ Covid-19 has given us a better understanding of the prevalence and impacts of digital exclusion. Not only are we taking proactive steps to build the digital capabilities of our customers, we are taking actions to directly address data poverty. Working with the National Data Bank, our fuel poverty partners can now offer customers access to free mobile data via data bundles and prepaid sim cards.

6.3 Delivery vehicle 2: Tailored support, unlocking access to smart energy technologies

Objective: enable accessible customer journeys to net zero with bespoke, targeted interventions

Outcomes

- Power Up Smart has supported **2,481** customers to save **£863,661**.
- **24 practical trials and 11 actions identified** to support electric vehicle (EV) uptake for disabled drivers.

Social value

- **£4.38** social value delivered in 2021/22 on top of every £1 spent in our Power Up Smart scheme.
- **£968,021** total benefits for customers in 2021/22

Why

With increased home working an enduring impact of the pandemic, our partners have found that more customers than ever are looking for ways to manage their energy use to reduce bills. Customers tell us that even after having a smart meter installed, they cannot always access the benefits. Advice and technology is constantly changing and difficulty using the smart meter, or switching to an incompatible supplier, can mean benefits are not realised.

How we delivered

Our 'Power Up Smart' scheme brings together a network of local agencies, led by Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts, to deliver follow-up support to customers after a smart meter installation.

→ We have adapted our approach to ensure that we provide ongoing support, including assisting customers to change or upgrade their smart meter. This ensures that customers who have adopted new technologies are not alienated by changes and remain able to participate.

Why

By 2035, over 1.3 million disabled motorists will be reliant on public charging for their EV. It is anticipated that about 900,000 disabled motorists are unlikely to be able to charge their EV at home, with limited flexibility on where they can park and accessibility concerns for charging solutions.

How we delivered

- ✓ In early 2022, learning from research shared by other DNOs, we launched an

innovative project to increase EV uptake for disabled users. Designed to overcome barriers identified through engagement with disabled drivers and individuals with high levels of anxiety, workshops were used to develop 24 potential practical trials and 11 actions for WPD to ensure the net zero transition works for all.

✓ Our project is approaching the issue of equitable EV uptake holistically. Potential trials include; reducing difficulty for customers when researching and choosing EVs, support to encourage uptake of accessible home charging options, and services to assist local authorities and site owners to provide accessible public charging.

✓ The second stage will analyse six of these trials in more detail. This will include engaging with customers and stakeholders to identify preferences, and undertaking social value analysis. With this engagement and research, we will co-create a practical trial to deliver clearly defined and measurable outcomes in 2022/23.

7. Customers benefit from record savings

Outcome delivered

The past 12 months have seen the number of people living in, or on the brink of, fuel poverty increase at an alarming rate. Rising inflation, escalating wholesale energy prices, reduced government support and the lasting impacts of Covid-19, have all impacted the cost of living for many customers. Our enduring relationships with a wide range of partners have enabled us to adapt our approach and evolve our understanding of the issues impacting vulnerability. As a result we have quickly tailored and retargeted our support. This has led to significant impacts and direct, meaningful benefits for tens of thousands of customers.

7.1 High impact fuel poverty support in a winter of heightened energy cost concerns

Objective: support our highest number of customers ever to make major cost savings

Outcomes

☆ **Four core 'Power Up' schemes** supported **10,062** customers to save **£2,558,812.**

| Hub leads | Referrals | Cost per head | Savings |
|--|-----------|---------------|---------|
| E. Mids Auriga Services + 4 sub-partners | 3,910 | £75 | £1.2m |
| W. Mids Coventry Citizen's Advice + 7 sub-partners | 973 | £73 | £227k |
| S. Wales Energy Saving Trust + 39 sub-partners | 3,067 | £75 | £637k |
| S. West Centre for Sustainable Energy + 19 sub-partners | 2,112 | £73 | £538k |

☆ **Four core Affordable Warmth schemes** supported **10,991** customers to save **£9,701,040.**

| Hub leads | Referrals | Cost per head | Savings |
|--|-----------|---------------|---------|
| E. Mids Nottingham Energy Partnership + 5 sub-partners | 2,487 | £59 | £1.2m |
| W. Mids Marches Energy Agency + 4 sub-partners | 2,441 | £73 | £745k |
| S. Wales Care and Repair Cardiff & The Vale + 11 sub-partners | 3,499 | £36 | £5.0m |
| S. West Plymouth Energy Community + 18 sub-partners | 2,564 | £55 | £2.7m |

Social value

- **£9.50** social value delivered in 2021/22 on top of every £1 spent in our core fuel poverty schemes: Power Up and Affordable Warmth.
- **£13.4 million** total benefits for customers in 2021/22.

Case study:

Mr T is in his late 70s, lives alone, and following a long career in the coal industry, suffers a number of permanent illnesses. After being hospitalised in March 2021, the coal mining charity CISWO referred Mr T to our scheme, and a full Home Energy and Wellbeing Assessment was completed. He was found to be eligible for the 'Warm Homes on Prescription' scheme and received a new gas central heating system free of charge. He has now permanently reduced his annual energy costs by £350 and been added to WPD's PSR.

£6,120 saved

Case study:

Ms C disclosed she struggled to keep up with her bills over lockdown and was now unable to work, caring for her daughter with poor mental health.

£795 saved

Unable to manage, she needed an affordable payment plan and guidance to reduce energy usage. We supported Ms C with applications to supplier hardship funds and 'Warm Home Discount', while building her confidence to manage energy bills.

Our two flagship fuel poverty programmes 'Power Up' and 'Affordable Warmth' (comprising eight individual schemes, each with a lead agency, and 107 sub-partners) work in a hub model to deliver comprehensive support (see section 2).

A 'lead agency' assesses the individual needs of each customer and based on these, calls on a pool of sub-partners with specific expertise across the broad range of factors impacting fuel poverty. The lead agency owns the referral to avoid hand-offs and confusion for customers, with the ultimate goal being to meet the unique needs of each customer, providing tailored support that achieves maximum and enduring positive impacts.

Why

Stakeholders tell us we are uniquely placed to bring disparate support services together, as well as lead new innovation collaborations to tackle fuel poverty and address new challenges brought by the cost of living crisis.

How we delivered

→ We hosted a best practice workshop for representatives of WPD's existing fuel poverty schemes. The wide network of partners shared service delivery experiences, emerging challenges and opportunities for innovation. Specifically timed to coincide with the impending energy price cap rise, it identified a range of practical improvement actions, detailed in this section, to adapt our services to this new operating context.

Why

Local delivery partners have direct access to customers we traditionally struggle to reach, via trusted front line services. One of these, Marches Energy Agency (MEA), identified social housing tenants in their communities were at risk of being left behind in the move to a smart energy future. They found access to LCTs can be difficult for tenants, and they may be less engaged than homeowners.

How we delivered

✓ Adding to our existing nine fuel poverty interventions (see section 2), MEA are working with Wrekin Housing Trust to survey tenants, revealing their confidence and current capabilities to engage with LCTs. PSR referrals are made to WPD for immediate support, while the insights are used to inform the design of new services to ensure potential issues are mitigated and our approach is as inclusive as possible from the outset.

Why

Stakeholders at our fuel poverty workshop were concerned that a hard winter and further energy bill rises could draw the 'just about managing' into fuel poverty.

How we delivered

→ We expanded the eligibility thresholds for all fuel poverty schemes to allow partners to proactively self-refer 'just about managing' customers for energy saving support. We expanded the expertise and scope of support to reflect this, enabling each scheme to deliver new

interventions to prevent customers falling into fuel poverty in the first place.

Why

Supplier prices and levels of support have changed this year, particularly as many have folded. Project partners told us this has increased customer confusion especially around how savings can be made without tariff switching and their eligibility for some elements within the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

How we delivered

→ We have worked extensively with our expert partners to keep abreast of changes within the energy sector so we can share the best packages with customers. Bespoke, tailored advice is then delivered to match each customer's needs, their eligibility for grants and the offers available from their specific supplier.

Why

As energy prices rise it is more important than ever that we keep customers updated on ways to save energy and manage their use more effectively.

How we delivered

→ Working with Energy Saving Trust, we adapted communications with our partners to share the savings customers can make, taking into account changes affecting energy prices. This includes reaching out as soon as we are aware of any changes, leading to increased engagement with the support services available and maximising the number of benefits being accessed.

£14.6m

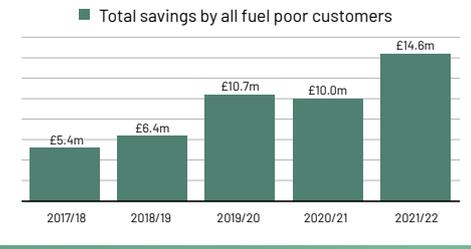
annual savings for customers across 26 schemes

25,928

fuel poor customers supported

£561

average saved per customer - our highest ever



7.2 Innovative collaboration with the health and social care sector unlocks new benefits for the hard-to-reach

Objective: utilise partnerships with health services as a vital way to identify and deliver tailored support to vulnerable customers

Outcomes

- Total savings across all health schemes - **£982,710**.
- Average saved per customer across all health schemes - **£734**.
- **Power Up Health:** Supported **837** customers to save **£304,070**.
- **Hope4U expectant and new mothers scheme:** Supported **127** customers to save **£193,872**.
- **'Energy MOT':** Supported **344** customers to save **£423,380**.
- **Citizens Advice South Somerset (CASS) Pathway Project:** Supported **30** customers to save **£61,388**.

Social value

Social value delivered in 2021/22 on top of every £1 spent:

- **Power Up Health:** £7.31
- **Hope4U:** £10.60
- **'Energy MOT':** £11.73
- **CASS Pathway Project:** £ 22.72

- **£1.1 million** total benefits delivered in 2021/22 across all health schemes.

Why

Expert stakeholders told us those living in fuel poverty feel a stigma, particularly if they are facing difficulties for the first time. This can lead to isolation and a reluctance to ask for help. The impact on mental health can be severe, especially if people need to cut back on essentials such as heating or eating. Living in fuel poverty can also make the recovery from mental health conditions harder, compounding affordability worries.

How we delivered

→ Our Pathway Project with Citizens Advice South Somerset (CASS), which provides specialist support for people with acute mental health issues, quickly adapted during Covid-19. This year, CASS delivered services by phone and WhatsApp, setting up a portal for a variety of healthcare agencies including NHS Trusts, inpatient wards, community mental health teams and GPs to refer customers for support around mental wellbeing, debt and money issues. Due to the complexity of customers' needs, effective engagement to resolve debt requires a specialist approach; using expert, trusted partners enables us to access hard-to-reach customers in urgent need and encourages them to disclose their difficulties so the most impactful support can be delivered.

✓ As a member of the National Mental Capacity Forum (NMCf) Utility Working

Group, we collaborated to produce a guide for embedding the Mental Health Capacity Act across utilities' support services. With a specific focus on the relationship between mental health and financial difficulty, the guidance includes case studies and resources that we share with partner agencies to enhance mental wellbeing support for our customers.

Why

Linking into trusted community groups is crucial to extend the reach of our fuel poverty support. GP surgeries assist the most vulnerable in our communities and are therefore pivotal to delivering the most effective, far-reaching, fuel poverty programme possible.

How we delivered

→ Our 'Energy MOT' partnership with Citizens Advice delivers in-person and online advice sessions in more than 50 GP surgeries across Derbyshire. This enduring model delivers preventative interventions adapted and refined with partner feedback. Our service is offered to all customers at these GPs to help them keep warm and stay healthy. In light of increasing energy prices this year, we have helped patients with social and financial problems, offering early, preventative interventions before issues develop into medical conditions impacting them and health services.

Why

Year on year increases in the savings delivered by our Power Up Health scheme have revealed how beneficial targeting support for specific health requirements can be when tackling fuel poverty.

Expert fuel poverty stakeholders emphasised that reducing fuel poverty should be a result of strong collaboration and data sharing across organisations and suppliers, especially healthcare providers, emergency services and trusted community groups.

Specific engagement with Walsall based charity, Hope4U, alerted us to a new, at risk group to further expand and deepen our understanding of vulnerability. We identified opportunities for WPD to deliver vital support and formed a new partnership to achieve this.

Local stakeholder insights - Walsall:

Deprivation is deeply entrenched with 44 out of 167 neighbourhoods amongst the most deprived 10% in England. Walsall also ranks as the 26th worst performing area for child poverty out of 326 local authorities in England.

How we delivered

✓ Several benefits and entitlements exist for new mothers, but awareness is low. Our new, innovative partnership helps new parents in Walsall to claim, linking into local NHS information services to maximise income and minimise expenditure. Most importantly, it builds each customer a bespoke savings plan, targeting long-lasting benefits to build greater resilience to 'shocks' and improving overall wellbeing.

✓ Multiagency collaboration allows us to go deeper into local communities, achieving a greater reach at the optimum time. A full benefit check is completed for each customer, as well as eligibility checks for additional grants. Frontline healthcare professionals are trained to spot signs of vulnerability and make appropriate referrals. Due to the success of this project we are now scaling up the scheme to four other NHS trusts in deprived areas.

Case study

A family recently moved to the UK, and were expecting a baby when they were identified by our scheme. They had been supplied with a property, but no benefits had been received and there was a lack of understanding around how to pay their bills, which could develop into issues without early, proactive intervention. They also had no baby equipment or clothes for the new arrival.

Hope4U contacted the Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC) to establish a bank account for them. They also assisted a benefits application, completed maternity forms to receive Healthy Start Vouchers and items were sourced and delivered for the baby in collaboration with South Staffs Water. Energy help and advice was given on how to use their heating system and manage future bills. When the baby arrived the family were registered onto the Priority Services Register (PSR).





Every Affordability Fund Partners delivery fuel poverty advice.

From left: Exeter Community Energy, Act on Energy



Community Matters Fund recipient, Mansfield Community and Voluntary Service.



Community Matters Fund recipients delivering support.

Clockwise from left: Community Resource Shropshire, Access to Business, Citizens Advice South West Staffordshire



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