



Serving the Midlands, South West and Wales

Social Obligations Workshops October 2019

Results and proposed actions

2019 Social Obligations Workshop

- In October 2019, WPD held two workshops to discuss its social obligations programme with stakeholders. This included work done to support both customers in vulnerable situations, as well as those in fuel poverty.
- The purpose of the workshops was to inform stakeholders about the company's current and future programme, to get feedback on its activities and to improve collaboration and joint ways of working.
- 53 stakeholders attended the workshops, over the two days representing 43 organisations.
- The workshop was split into four sessions. Each session included a presentation followed by a roundtable discussion.
- The following summarises the key feedback received and the actions WPD will take as a direct result in the coming year.



**Western Power Distribution
Social Obligations Workshops
Bristol And Birmingham
October 2019**

Session 1: Introduction & our current programme

WPD session:

- Why have you attended today
- What has been your experience of working with us to date
- Do you have any views on our current programme

Key feedback from stakeholders:

Stakeholder feedback was generally positive and praised WPD for running successful projects.

- There is a need for a better flow of information between WPD and its referral partners
- Consider removing the fee to tender for projects as it isn't fair to expect charities to pay this
- Do more to promote the PSR /(combined with energy saving advice?) on social media. Remember some customers can't/don't access technology
- Continue to promote WPD as a company because the low level of awareness is a barrier to increasing PSR sign ups

Proposed actions:

1. *New website pages will be published in Q1 2020 including much more detailed information about projects and partners*
2. *Alternative procurement method agreed with Purchasing team which will remove fee and simplify future tender opportunities*
3. *Run a social media campaign to promote PSR, & consider ways to combine both PSR and energy saving advice. Investigate non digital outlets*
4. *Improvements in web pages, continue TV & social media campaigns to promote WPD*

Session 2: Ofgem's Vulnerability Strategy

WPD session:

Outlined four different areas within the strategy and the associated outcomes that WPD has identified as requiring further work and requested stakeholder views on how to achieve this

Improving identification of vulnerability and smart use of data: *Better use of data enabling more holistic and targeted support*

Key feedback :

- There is a need to create one single PSR for suppliers and networks
- Share the Social Indicator Mapping with water to help them with PSR creation
- Work with social landlords who could for example include PSR information on welcome packs for new tenants

Proposed actions:

5. *Continue working towards the 'one stop shop' web based platform for PSR registrations with Auriga*
6. *Publicise Social Indicator Mapping on social media and present it at the UK Regulators Network working group*
7. *Approach social landlords to offer PSR services and potentially link into innovation projects*



Session 2: Ofgem's Vulnerability Strategy

Encouraging positive and inclusive innovation:

Suppliers and networks to demonstrate innovative measures to support customers in vulnerable situations

Key feedback :

- WPD should look at Wessex Water Debt Assist programme as good example of innovation in this area
- Ensure family members are included in PSR alerts
- Working with new technologies such as Alexa or Google assistant to provide support to customers
- Another innovation suggested was to install batteries rather diesel generators as power cut back up

Proposed actions:

8. *WPD to investigate collaboration opportunities with Wessex Water*
9. *Family members can download the WPD Power Cut Reporter app and register the address of the PSR customer they would like alerts for. They will receive a notification if that saved address has a power cut. WPD to promote this feature on social media*
10. *The WPD Power Cut Reporter app will work with Apple home assistant to report a power cut. WPD will promote this feature on social media and media outlets*
11. *Investigate battery back up options with battery supplier*

Session 2: Ofgem's Vulnerability Strategy

Working with others to solve issues that cut across multiple sectors: *We want to achieve greater understanding and consistency across essential service markets for more joined up action to improve the experience of customers in vulnerable situations*

Key feedback :

- Support for more joined up action and collaboration with other DNO's and utilities to reduce the number of contacts that customers receive
- Do more to work alongside with or collaborate with the healthcare sector, e.g. hospital trusts, discharge teams, pharmacy couriers
- WPD's social indicator mapping should have the ability to be shared using GIS

Proposed actions:

12. *Collaboration opportunities have been offered to all GDN's and Water companies*
13. *Expand WPD's stakeholder database of healthcare providers & continue targeting this area, to find referral and project partners*
14. *Investigate if the next update to the social indicator mapping can do this*



Session 3: A smart and fair future- the transition to DSO

WPD session:

- Were you aware of these changes – do you understand the transition to DSO
- What do you see as the opportunities and challenges for customers in vulnerable situations and fuel poor customers as we transition to a smart network?
- What do you see as the opportunities and challenges for service providers as we transition to a smart network?

Key feedback :

- Stakeholders felt strongly that trust is a critical factor in whether the transition to a smart network would work for everyone
- It was felt that those that would be left behind most in a smart future would be those who experienced digital / technological exclusion
- It was stressed that when planning for a smart future, it must be recognised that customers in vulnerable situations are not a homogenous group: The industry needs to think about the overall customer journey and who may be disadvantaged along that journey
- Fuel poor customers were seen a group where a smart network could provide opportunities for support, and or inclusion in flexibility services. However there needs to be significant research to enable the correct delivery/incentives

Response:

15. *WPD will continue to work with trusted partners to support customers in vulnerable situations, and learn lessons from other utility initiatives to ensure customer trust is not broken*
16. *WPD will remain cognisant of digital exclusion and ways to participate in a smart future as we transition to a DSO. We will also work with service providers to help provide solutions/enablers to ensure no customer is left behind*
17. *WPD are working with Centre for Sustainable Energy to assess the factors that can disadvantage a customer in any different number of scenarios and ways to mitigate any disadvantage*
18. *Continue seeking stakeholder feedback and research to build trust and create/offer the services required to help customers and the network*

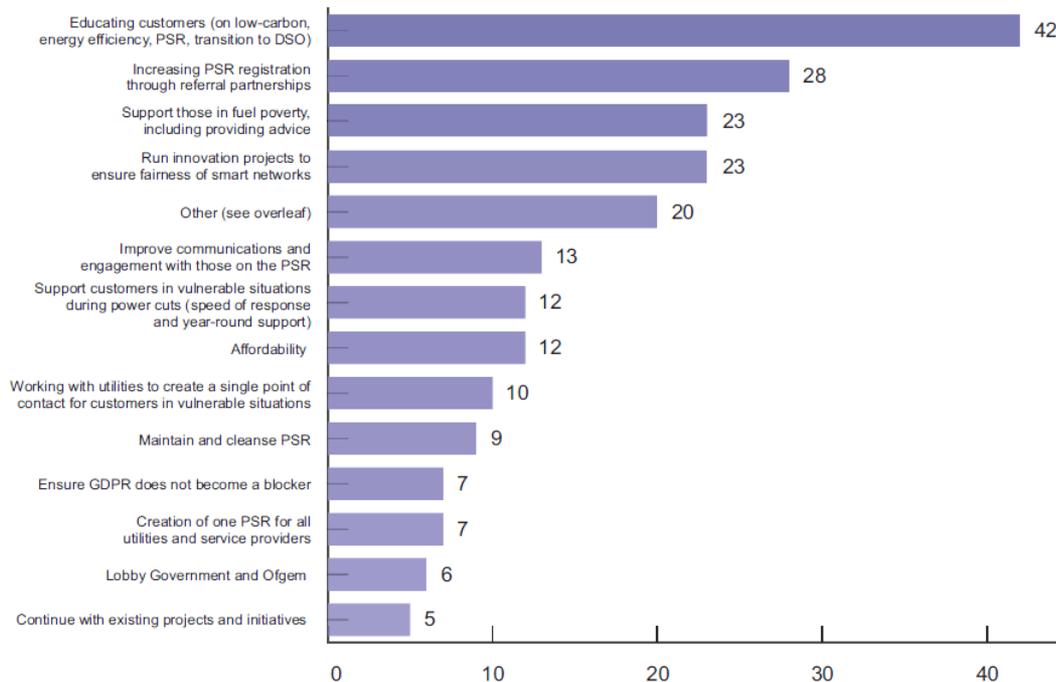
Session 4: Your priorities for our next business plan

WPD session:

- The presentation explained the regulatory framework for DNOs and how WPD is starting to develop its next Business Plan (2023 – 2028).
- Stakeholders were asked to identify what their priorities were for the next Business Plan. They were then given five votes and asked to put these against the priorities that the table had identified

Key Feedback:

This graph summarises the results from this exercise:



Session 4: Your priorities for our next business plan

Key Feedback:

Many of the suggestions put forward by stakeholders were activities that WPD is already doing in the area of social obligations and want it to continue in the next Business Plan – so much so that several stakeholders captured it as a priority in and of itself.

This included:

Increasing PSR registrations through referral partnerships; maintaining and cleansing the PSR; supporting those in fuel poverty; and supporting customers in power cuts.

Other priorities suggested that were new, related to the transition to a smart network, such as running innovation projects to ensure the transition is fair. It also included a much greater emphasis on educating customers on a range of issues including on low-carbon, energy efficiency, PSR, and the transition to DSO.

Response:

WPD were pleased that stakeholders wanted existing activities to continue and that they remain important and relevant.

We will continue to develop these priority areas with stakeholders and ensure their views are represented as part of the of the business plan creation process.

