Why are we engaging?

By placing your needs at the centre of our planning, we can ensure that our distribution networks are fit for purpose. We need to adapt our business behaviour and culture according to the ever changing needs of our customers and growth within the industry.

It is important to us that we raise your awareness of our business, what we do, who we are, what our plans and proposals are, what activities we are up to, new innovations and research, improvements we are making and to constantly strive to improve our customers’ satisfaction. We can’t do this without exploring options with you, discovering what you want and ensuring your voices are heard while also considering the future needs of the electricity industry.

Thank you for the input we have received from you over the last 12 months, we hope you will continue to give us your feedback over the next year to ensure SSEPD meets the challenges of the future with your needs at the centre of our business.
About us

Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution (SSEPD) own the local electricity networks that serve around 2.8 million customers in central southern England and 740,000 customers in the north of Scotland. Local networks distribute electricity from the national transmission system to homes and businesses, our two networks are comprised of 106,000 substations and 130,000 km of overhead lines and underground cables across one third of the UK.

Our first priority is to provide a safe and reliable supply of electricity to the communities we serve in Scotland and England. We achieve this by:

- Operating our network assets effectively to ‘keep the lights on’
- Maintaining our assets so they remain reliable.
- Repairing our assets in the event of a fault
- Improving and upgrading the existing networks or building new ones allowing additional electricity connections

Our networks, Southern Electric Power Distribution (SEPD) and Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution (SHEPD)

The journey of electricity

1. Generation
2. Transmission
3. Distribution
4. Commercial & Industrial Business Consumers
5. Distribution Automation Devices
6. Residential Consumers
Changing for good
Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution (SSEPD) runs its business in a way that supports growth in our communities, and, most importantly, makes sure the lights stay on.

Engaging effectively with you, our stakeholders, is central to our Distribution business. Whether working with our suppliers, customers, service providers or contractors, we know that working closely with our stakeholders is essential for our business to deliver on its promises to customers.

Working in partnership with our stakeholders
We have a long history of working with our stakeholders to improve our business and this year we have formalised our stakeholder approach. We are now confident that we have the correct foundation and rigour around these processes, and that they complement the way we run our business, thereby enabling us to continue to serve your best interests and support growth in our communities.

After our first key engagement last year, I was pleased to find 96% of stakeholders consulted said that SSEPD’s approach to consultation was either very useful or useful. Reviewing the feedback from our final event of the year, I was delighted to see that 100% of stakeholders rated our effectiveness in engaging.

I believe that enhancing the direct interaction between stakeholders and our teams is key to incorporating positive improvements into our business. To support that, our Stakeholder Engagement Team works in collaboration with my Heads of Business to improve our relationship with stakeholders, keep them informed of our plans and to ensure that we gather their views.

As we progress, I want our business to take an increasingly collaborative approach and to empower you so that our business evolves in a way that increasingly focuses on your needs and your expectations. I look forward to leading my team as we deliver tangible and meaningful improvements for our business and the people we serve.

Stuart Hogarth
Director of Distribution
Our stakeholder values and strategy

Core values
Our core values are applied to every task, action, and role within SSEPD ensuring a consistent approach in everything we do. We’ve applied our values directly to our stakeholder strategy:

Safety
We will undertake our engagement with stakeholders safely and responsibly.

Service
We will engage with our stakeholders in a way that we are proud of and make commitments we can deliver.

Efficiency
We will keep our engagement activities simple, do the work that adds value and avoid wasting money, materials, energy or time.

Sustainability
We will undertake our engagement activities ethically and transparently. In changing our business in response to stakeholder views, we will take the long term view to achieve growth while safeguarding the environment.

Excellence
We will strive to ensure that our engagement gets better, smarter and more innovative.

Teamwork
We support and value our stakeholders and will work with them in an open and honest way; this will include actively involving our stakeholders in designing the engagement process.

Stakeholder engagement strategy
We are committed to placing our stakeholders at the centre of our business planning and improvement processes. We can’t do this without knowing what our stakeholders want and need.

1. Identifying our stakeholders
We have developed a list of stakeholders who we felt could add particular insight into our day-to-day business and RIIO-ED1 business planning process.

2. Understanding our relationship with our stakeholders
We have organised our stakeholders to ensure engagements are effective and relative to our existing relationships with stakeholders; the level of influence they have over our business plan and processes; and their interest in shaping it.

3. Actively engaging our stakeholders
We offer a range of ways to engage with us: interviewer administered surveys, written consultation documents; audio recorded focus groups with electronic audience response system; on-line surveys; structured interviews with stakeholders; stakeholder meetings, events, fora and workshops; customer voice groups.

With our stakeholders in mind, we will continually monitor and evaluate our mechanisms of engagement to ensure they remain constructive.

4. Informing our stakeholders
Our network and customer performance reports are publicly available in a range of formats.

We will produce and regularly update our stakeholder engagement and communication plan which will provide stakeholders with enough information, and in a format they want, to enable them to participate in key debates.

5. Listening and responding to stakeholders
We will publish key themes arising from our stakeholder consultation processes and our response to them. This allows our stakeholders know what action we will be taking both to improve our internal processes and how it has informed our business plan.

6. Being accessible to our stakeholders
We are committed to being open and easy to talk to.
Our approach to engagement

We have made the following commitments to you:

- Be easy to contact – offering a range of ways to get in touch with us
- Listen to everyone fairly and equally – we want to hear everyone’s views
- Provide timely responses – we will be in touch within five working days with a clear and accurate response
- Show how your views have informed our plans, policies and processes – we will analyse and consider every response we receive

We will publish how your feedback has affected our business processes, procedures and our business plan.

This year our stakeholder engagement team have consulted with almost 2000 people using a range of methods:

- Various surveys
- Written consultation documents
- Audio recorded focus groups
- Workshops and deliberative events enriched through the use of an electronic audience response system
- Press releases
- Publishing video footage
- Social media
- Structured interviews
- Stakeholder meetings
- Open days
- Events
- Fora
- Customer voice groups

With your needs in mind, we will continually monitor and adapt our methods of communicating with you to ensure we sustain constructive engagement. So far you have told us that you like the way we are consulting with you. The graph below shows your preferred methods of engagement. We have focused our engagement activities around what you have told us.

![Graph showing preferred methods of engagement]

“...You did an excellent job, spoke very clearly and came across as a team who have taken on board a lot of feedback from stakeholders over the last couple of years to make significant progress in the way you engage with customers, consultants and stakeholders. I left with the distinct impression that you and your team have an open door policy and wish to engage with your customers.”

Charlie Connell, SHREC 4
**Event timeline: RIIO ED1**

Ofgem, our Regulator, sets service standards and monitors energy companies’ performance. Ofgem also restricts the amount of revenue companies can recover through a process called a price control. The price control process sets allowances for investments and costs associated with developing, maintaining and upgrading the networks. Ofgem reviews it every few years. The current price control period started on 1 April 2010 and will end on 31 March 2015. The next price control period is called ‘Revenue = Incentives + Innovations + Outputs – Electricity Distribution (RIIO-ED1)’ and will run from 1 April 2015 until 31 March 2023. Ofgem has asked us to prepare a business plan for the next price control period.

As part of our RIIO-ED1 process, we designed a Programme of Listening to capture your views in a series of focus groups, one to one interviews, formal events and street and telephone surveys. This gives you the opportunity to have your say and influence our business plan for the period 1 April 2015 to 21 March 2023.

We scheduled our RIIO-ED1 activities carefully over the course of the year, giving consideration to our business-as-usual engagement to minimise ‘consultation fatigue’, and published consultation papers explaining how we balanced your views against the things we need to do to ensure our network operates effectively and efficiently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June – July 2012</th>
<th>1212 stakeholders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Telephone and Street Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Used to inform Our First Consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept – Nov 2012</td>
<td>116 stakeholders</td>
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<td>• Our First Consultation</td>
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<td>• Used to inform Our Second Consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov – Dec 2012</td>
<td>117 stakeholders</td>
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<td>• Focus groups and 1 to 1 interviews</td>
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<td>• Used to inform Our Second Consultation and day-to-day activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 2012 – March 2013</td>
<td>106 stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• On-line survey</td>
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<td>• Used to inform Our Business Plan and day-to-day activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb – March 2013</td>
<td>67 stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Our Second Consultation Paper</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Used to inform Our Business Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>21 stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Parliamentary Events</td>
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<td>• Used to inform Our Business Plan and day-to-day activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>52 stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stakeholder Events</td>
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<td>• Used to inform Our Business Plan</td>
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We have made all our material available on our website, which also allowed us to share the learning from our engagement activities with you, other Distribution Network Operators (DNO) and communities. To encourage participation, we promoted our Programme of Listening for RIIO-ED1 by:

- posting video footage describing the consultation process, what had been achieved and what had been planned
- launching press releases to all media contacts and displayed them on our website
- using Social Media

With each engagement activity we carried out, we closed the loop by checking with you to ensure that we had interpreted your views correctly. Additionally we issued a business response to each engagement activity to show how we changed our process, plans or approach as a result of your views and suggestions. Importantly, where we couldn’t take your views into consideration we explained why. You have actively informed our Business Plan for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2023 – it has been a truly collaborative approach.
Arran and Kintyre – A case study
Exceptionally violent snowstorms hit the west coast of Scotland in March 2013, resulting in as many as 20,000 customers being without power. Building on months of engagement in preparation for such an event, we supported communities in implementing their emergency plans while our field staff battled the elements to restore supplies.

In collaboration with Strathclyde Police, Strategic Coordinating Groups (SCGs) were established. Our Network Services Director, together with experienced members of our operations team, attended update meetings four times a day with representatives from the emergency services, local authorities, mountain rescue, the British Red Cross, NHS, HM Coastguard and CalMac Ferries. Face-to-face meetings were held in Lochgilphead and on Arran.

Once all supplies had been restored, we constructed two permanent power stations (one the largest mobile diesel generator in the UK). These were installed in just two weeks and offer an alternative source of supply in the event of any major damage to the network.

“This week I have visited some of our members adversely affected by the storms. Those I have been talking and working with in both Arran and Kintyre have been extraordinarily grateful for the work carried out by your engineers… their professionalism and commitment to solving the multiple faults… in very difficult conditions and their willingness to work with and assist the community and individual farms.”

Nigel Miller, President of the NFU Scotland

“The degree of dedication shown by all your employees is admirable and I am very appreciative of the level of partnership working and cooperation with the Council and our other key partners”

Sally Loudon,
Chief Executive of Argyll and Bute Council
Business as usual – Open days
Along with everyday interaction with stakeholders, we have carried out specific engagement activities. These engagement activities have been developed to interact with stakeholders on specific issues, or to develop better relationships with stakeholders in the communities that we serve.

This year we opened the doors to our depots, control rooms and emergency service centres to give a broad range of stakeholders the opportunity to see our business as a ‘whole’ and to shape our thinking and future priorities by voicing their opinions, concerns and ideas in a structured, but informal manner.

The 15 events in Scotland and Southern England attracted a wide range of delegates including representatives from Berkeley Homes, Action England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, and Electrical Contractors Association. The events were also attended by County and Local Councils, Police, Developers, Generators and Suppliers.

Stakeholders were invited to come along and find out more about what we do to keep the local electricity network safe and reliable, and how we provide new connections. The Open Doors Days included a behind-the-scenes tour and allowed the participants to meet and engage with our senior management team and front line staff. An example outcome of these events is that you told us that we need to better inform you on the process, regulation and limitations involved in new connections and chargeable jobs.

We have now planned four exhibitions to address these specific requests, in direct response to your feedback.

On-site connection quotations and connections guides
During our stakeholder events we found that our Minor Connections customers were keen for us to visit the site prior to sending out a quotation. They put a particularly high importance on being able to discuss the work in person and to receive an idea of cost at this early stage of the process.

As a result, we have been carrying out a trial in two of our depots to offer an early site visit for our Minor Connections customers. We are now evaluating the results of this with a view to implementing a more widespread option in the next 12 to 18 months.

When we asked about the Minor Connections process in our customer surveys, you said:

“Make it easier to find out how to get it done”

“The whole process is very complicated”

Our response
We created New Connections advice booklets, available online and in hard copy, so that you have the information you require in a clear and simple format.

Benefit: We have delivered what you told us you want. You are better informed on how to progress your connections with minimal delay, and are fully aware of the roles and responsibilities in the process.

Minimising inconvenience while keeping our staff safe
On occasion, to allow our staff to work safely while undertaking work on our assets, we must switch off part of our network; sometimes this will interrupt supplies to customers. While we notify you in advance of these interruptions, you told us that you want more notice of interruptions and that our communications were often ignored as they were perceived to be junk mail.

In direct response to this, we have started issuing notifications in a bold, colourful format, by hand, at least seven days before the interruption – the current industry standard is two days.

We are also trialling on-site support during planned interruptions to interact with local residents, addressing any individual concerns you may have had and to offer general support to the local community. Using a specially designed SSEPD community vehicle makes us firmly visible in the area and allows us to provide hot drinks and offer charging facilities for mobile phones and other devices.

“It’s good to know what is actually going on when the power goes down – I’ve always wondered what your guys are up to. Thanks for all the information and the hot coffee!”

General Manager, Farnham Golf Club
Innovation: preparing for the networks of the future

Improving communication
In the past year, we have been developing our range of communication methods to ensure that we accommodate the needs of as many stakeholders as possible. For those of you who choose to contact us by telephone, we have invested in an Integrated Communications Platform (ICP).

The system has been designed to handle high call volumes, route calls effectively and proactively notify you of outages and restoration times, without the need to speak to a Customer Service Representative. In the future, you will have the option to receive voice alerts, Short Message Service (SMS) updates or to request a call back from a Customer Service Representative.

We provide website updates and frequent information to our followers on Twitter channels, addressing individual issues using private messaging. We also try to reach as many of our ‘non-followers’ as possible by using hash tags to identify geographical areas affected by our activities; Twitter users can click on that hash tag to bring up all tweets relating to the power outage in their area in real-time.

Power Track – The first industry ‘app’
In response to specific requests from customers, we became the first DNO to offer an ‘app’ to provide customers with relevant and timely information during a supply interruption without needing to make a call to our Emergency Service Centre, saving them both time and money when using a mobile phone.

Power Track has been designed to provide the 39%\(^1\) of people who use mobile phones for internet access with information on where power cuts are and assure them that we are aware of them; to provide an estimate of when an engineer will be on site; the time of the next update; and the anticipated restoration time. It also provides a link to our website, our Twitter channels and our 24 hour Emergency Service Centre numbers. The website version has an additional facility which allows customers to report a power cut.

Several reviewers have rated Power Track highly, saying:

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ Excellent
by Electrical Association – 05-Mar-2013
First app for the electricity distribution industry. Looks great, user friendly and does what it says. Really useful. Keep the updates coming great info well done SSEPD.

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ Handy if you’re a sparky
by matt30020 – 11-Jan-2013
Great app. I’m forever getting called out to no power in a property. Now I will be able to see if it’s (sic) an area problem or not.

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ The right info when you need it
by 8woodcj – 19-Dec-2012
Great App. Shows exactly what I need to know when the power is out. Will keep on my iPhone to use when we next get a power cut.

Benefit: By offering a suite of communication methods, you will receive a service that has been tailored to your individual needs and preferences.

Plans for 2013/14: We will closely monitor the feedback we receive from you through our engagement programme and enhance our offering as technology, and your needs, change.

\(^1\) Source: [http://media.ofcom.org.uk/facts/](http://media.ofcom.org.uk/facts/)
NINES (Northern Isles New Energy Solutions)

NINES is being developed by SSEPD in association with a range of local stakeholders, including Shetland Islands Council, Hjaltland Housing Association and Shetland Heat and Power. It aims to support Shetland’s sustainable energy future by developing and managing the electricity distribution network more effectively to allow renewable energy to play a bigger part in meeting Shetland’s energy needs.

NINES stakeholder engagement includes:

- Involving householders in trialling modern ‘smart’ storage heaters which help to balance the electricity network
- Events to explain the benefits of the smart heaters to housing association tenants and secure their participation in the project
- Working with the local district heating providers to develop plans for a new electric boiler to the existing district heating system, which would in part be powered directly by a small new wind farm close to their site
- Working with developers of small scale generation to deploy new technology on the network that will allow more small scale renewables to connect to the network
- Working with local agencies on the installation of a large scale battery to help manage energy flows on the islands

Our engagement with Hjaltland Housing Association (HHA) to deliver affordable warmth to the participating HHA residents represents a replicable model for local authority engagement in the area of thermal energy storage for domestic demand-side management. We have already committed to share our learning from these projects with National Energy Action and the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum.

"With being able to programme the heaters we can get it to within an hour or two from when we get up or when we get home in the afternoon so it’s far more efficient for us" and “Because obviously you can programme in your... heating, I’m actually using less heating”.

Shetland Resident

TVV (Thames Valley Vision)

We are working with customers and partners, including Bracknell Forest Council, to trial a range of smart grid innovations through our £29.9M Thames Valley Vision project. TVV is one of the largest projects awarded funding under the Low Carbon Networks Fund (LCNF) Tier 2 scheme and will provide new learning enabling network operators to better anticipate, understand and support customer behaviour change as the UK moves towards a low carbon economy.

SSEPD provide the cables and substations that deliver electricity to homes and businesses in the Thames Valley area that account for just under one fifth of your total electricity bill, and TVV will allow SSEPD to support a lower carbon, higher electricity consuming future, at the lowest possible cost.

TVV is based in Bracknell since the local network is due for major system upgrade before 2020. SEPD is seeking to identify more cost effective solutions than traditional network reinforcement, that will require new and larger substations to be built, and require disruptive works to dig up roads to lay more cables.

Bracknell and the Thames Valley is home to many large companies and the local network is typical of much of the UK’s network, and therefore the lessons we learn can quickly be applied nationwide.
Caring for our communities

SSEPD staff through the Community at Heart scheme created a new reading area for the children of Merkinch Primary School, Inverness.

Our engagement culture is not only reflected in the way we do business, but in everything we do. We invite our stakeholder community to our events but we also take opportunities to give something back to the community.

Through Community at Heart, our employee volunteering programme, we support initiatives within the communities in which our employees live and work. We provide real, practical support which we hope will bring lasting benefits to those communities.

Every year, our staff have the opportunity to take a day out of their typical working life to support local community projects. In 2012/13, over 1,300 days were used by our staff to help many different organisations including charities, schools, parish councils and hospitals.

We also offer talks and materials to schools and are part of the STEM network, which creates opportunities to inspire young people in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

“May I take this opportunity to say a huge thank you for contributing your time and effort to spend a day volunteering with Food Train. As you know, Food Train provide a vital grocery and shopping delivery service to older people unable to shop for themselves because of age-related frailty, disability or health... SSEPD have helped to maintain this essential service... and Food Train cannot thank you enough!”

Fran Thow,
Regional Manager, Food Train
We’re positively glowing
When Gary Mullender, Team Manager at West London depot experienced a distressed customer with no torch or candles during a fault he came up with a simple idea to combat this problem. He submitted his idea through the SSEPD Licence to Innovate scheme.

This innovation was the purchase and distribution of ‘glowsticks’, a robust plastic tube filled with two chemicals which when mixed create light. These glowsticks provide a safe, reliable light source for an 8-10 hour duration which removes the need for candles, torches etc. These glowsticks can be provided to customers who are suffering from an interruption to their power supply, primarily elderly or vulnerable customers who may not have alternate forms of emergency lighting.

‘I think they’re wonderful, I’ve given them to elderly customers and families alike when I’ve gone out on faults and everyone has always said how good they are, they definitely get used lots!’

K Purslow – SSEPD Team Manager

Harvest safety
We implemented a campaign to raise awareness amongst agricultural workers of the importance of maintaining safe clearance between farm machinery and electrical equipment; the campaign also provided advice on what to do if machinery does make contact with overhead lines and on how to access additional safety information and resources.

The initiative was supported by the provision of stickers for placement in the cabs of farm vehicles, reminding operators to check their working height and advice on what to do in an emergency. The stickers were developed as a result of an idea submitted through our Licence to Innovate scheme which encourages colleagues to come up with new ways of working which fit with our company values – in this case, safety.

The stickers have been very well received, with rural business cooperative Ringlink pledging to supply “unlimited numbers of stickers” and the National Union of Farmers in Scotland praising the initiative as “a simple, yet effective, reminder of the danger of working with overhead electric power lines.”
Moving forward

We will continue to assess our strategy towards engagement to ensure your needs are at the centre of our business plans and processes.

We also commit to reviewing every method of engagement to provide each stakeholder group with means of advising us in an appropriate and convenient manner. Events will continue at regular intervals throughout the next year and beyond, we would like to encourage you to attend and ‘have your say’.

The details we have included in this report are only a small percentage of the feedback you have provided, the work we have completed and comments you’ve been kind enough to give in response. If you have any queries or would like to know more, please contact us.

Contact us

Stakeholder engagement
If you have any questions, or you would like to take part in future stakeholder consultations:

Call us: 0345 0760 515
Email: stakeholder.engagement@sse.com
Write to: Lisa Banks, Stakeholder Engagement Team, Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution, Walton Park, Walton Road, Cosham, PO6 1UJ

You will also find more information on our website at www.ssepd.co.uk under ‘Have your say’

To report a power cut
If you experience a power cut, please call our Emergency Service Centre:

Central southern England: 0800 072 7282
Northern Scotland: 0800 300 999

For general enquiries
Central southern England: 0800 048 3516
North of Scotland: 0800 048 3515

If things go wrong
Email: distribution.complaints@sse.com

Central southern England
Call: 0800 980 1395
Write to: Julie Thame, Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution, 55 Vastern Road, Reading RG1 8BU

North of Scotland
Call: 0800 980 1394
Write to: Donna Cameron, Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution, Inveralmond House, 200 Dunkeld Road, Perth PH1 3AQ

Priority services
We can offer extra help to customers who register for our priority services. Contact your electricity supplier to register and they will let us know which services you need.

Follow us on social media

Twitter
Facebook
LinkedIn