



Scottish & Southern  
Electricity Networks

# Collaborative action on consumer vulnerability

PART 3 2020-21

**OVERVIEW OF EVIDENCE**  
Stakeholder Engagement and  
Consumer Vulnerability Submission



# Collaborative action on consumer vulnerability



Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution

## Contents

- 1 3.1 Introduction and core objectives for consumer vulnerability
- 2 3.2 Our engagement, smart use of data and how we measure outcomes for continuous improvement
- 3 3.3 Expanding on fuel poverty and energy efficiency activities
- 5 3.4 Widening our partnership network and collaborative activities
- 7 3.5 Driving forward PSR provision and promotion
- 9 3.6 Ensuring our services are inclusive and accessible now and, in the future

**770,844**

customers benefiting from peace of mind through PSR

**£9.70**

average social value forecast over the next 5 years per £ spent on initiatives measured

**9.29**

out of 10 PSR Customer satisfaction score from Broad Measure surveys. Up from 9.23 last year



**68.5%**

of eligible households registered for our PSR

**305%**

increase in the last year for energy efficiency referrals

**73%**

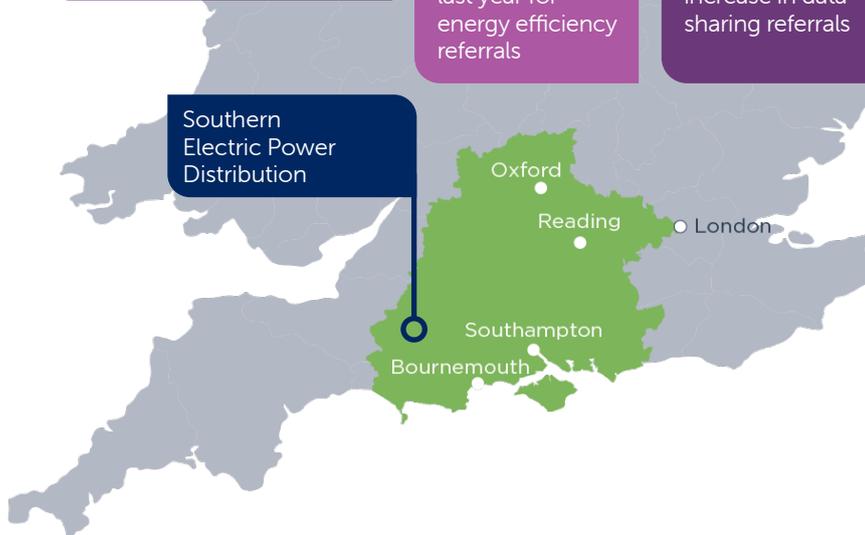
year-on-year increase in data sharing referrals

**63.2%**

more households helped with fuel poverty than last year



Southern Electric Power Distribution



## 3.1 Introduction and core objectives for consumer vulnerability



This past year has been unlike any other and as we've been working to keep power flowing to the 3.8 million homes and businesses we serve, our role to support those most vulnerable in society has been more critical than ever.

This year, we've evolved and adapted to keep our customers and employees safe, while working collaboratively with our partners to improve the services we provide, centred around four key areas:

**Expanding on fuel poverty and energy efficiency activities** – we've made great strides to increase fuel poverty support, implementing a two-tiered, targeted approach to engage harder to reach communities. Our well-established energy efficiency referral project has been enhanced by expanded partnerships with Citizens Advice Scotland and new partnerships with The Footprint Trust, leading to a year-on-year increase of 63.2% customers supported with energy efficiency and fuel poverty matters.

**Widening partnerships and collaborative activities** – this year we've driven collaboration to share best practice and support wider outreach, delivering real value for our customers. We're proud of

our leading role and proactive approach to develop and launch the PSR Scotland website, demonstrating that integration across sectors to simplify registration benefits customers.

**Driving forward Priority Services Register provision and promotion** – this year we've advanced our work programme to identify gaps in the reach and impact of our PSR, improving our leading mapping tool and investing in enhanced data to target those hardest to reach across our communities. We know our stakeholders expect additional value from us, and it is for that reason we take a data driven, targeted approach to PSR promotion and fuel poverty support.

**Ensuring our services are inclusive and accessible** – the energy industry is undergoing a significant period of change which will impact the lives of all our customers. We're not only committed to ensuring that no one is left behind in the transition to net zero, we're focused on

bringing all customers along from the very beginning, through embedding fairness and inclusivity in projects like Equal EV and Smart and Fair.

This year has truly demonstrated the complex and transient nature of vulnerability. The pandemic has defied previously recognised conceptions, challenging our understanding and approach to support customers in vulnerable situations. This shows how important it is to remain flexible, agile and continually evolve to meet the needs of all our customers.

Our commitment to addressing consumer vulnerability is now stronger than ever as demonstrated by this submission, listening to our stakeholders and acting on their feedback is driving tangible and meaningful outcomes for the communities we serve.

**Eliane Algaard,**  
Operations Director

### Our vulnerability principles

Our consumer vulnerability strategy is built on championing the needs of every customer, regardless of where they are, when they need us or their individual requirements. We listen carefully to the feedback our customers and stakeholders provide to ensure our strategy continues to be holistic, effective and progressive. To make our services appropriate and accessible for all customers, our approach to consumer vulnerability is focussed on the following principles:

1. Understanding the needs of customers
2. Using data to deliver tailored support
3. Partnership and collaborative working to help deliver services
4. Embedding knowledge and learnings and sharing best practice
5. Tracking performance against KPIs to ensure our efforts remain effective

### STAKEHOLDER-LED CORE OBJECTIVES

Expand on fuel poverty and energy efficiency activities

Widening our partnership network and collaborative activities

Drive forward Priority Services Register provision and promotion

Ensure our services are inclusive and accessible now and in the future

### KEY IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED IN 2020-21

- **1,038** referrals to YES Energy Solutions and Home Energy Scotland – a **305% increase** on last year
- **2,754 homes** helped by our outreach partners and projects
- **NHS partnerships** and data sharing to help fight the pandemic and stop people returning to hospital
- Outreach projects alone delivered an annual saving of **£323,402** for customers

- New **PSR Scotland** website launched in collaboration with Scottish Water and SP Energy Networks
- Collaborative PSR and efficiency initiatives with 6 water companies, leading to a **272% increase** in visits to combined PSR pages
- Launch of the Empowered by Energy project with National Energy Action and SGN to support **47 refugee families** with energy-related matters

- Rapid **adaptations in service** helping people most at risk from COVID-19
- A targeted approach to PSR promotion, leading to **68.5%** of eligible households now being registered
- Further **data enhancements** to reduce PSR gaps
- **98%** of PSR customers felt reassured and less anxious during planned supply interruptions

- Achieved British Standard for Inclusive Service for the **6th consecutive year**
- Inclusive **PSR promotional campaign** reaching customers during lockdown and isolation
- Winner of Utility Week **"Keeping us Connected"** Award for tackling social isolation
- Leading the way in **embedding fairness** in the drive to Net Zero

## 3.2 Our engagement, smart use of data and how we measure outcomes for continuous improvement

### Insight and data drives how we react in the present and plan for the future

During 2020-21 we have sought insight and used data in several ways to inform how we support consumers in vulnerable situations. Upon synthesising the insights it was clear that our stakeholders had two key focus areas:

1. Increasing the smart use of data
2. Ensuring all our customers can become greener and participate in the transition to a low carbon world

Illustrated below are examples of how we sought stakeholder insights and improved data to inform decision making.

#### Consumer Vulnerability Workshop **New**

We held our first dedicated Consumer Vulnerability Workshop in addition to our Stakeholder Engagement events where 57 informed stakeholders from 50 organisations joined us to focus on improving outcomes for consumers in vulnerable situations. We also welcomed Simon Roberts, CEO of Centre for Sustainable Energy, to share learnings from the Smart and Fair? project.

#### Surveys **Embedded**

We conducted 600 in-depth telephone surveys with PSR customers. We also surveyed 1,500 consumers online and a further 100 over the phone to guard against digital exclusion. This gave us insights into both service provision and the affordability of electricity costs in light of COVID-19. It also informed us of current barriers to the take up of low carbon technologies, leading to the creation of an enabling fund in our SEPD licence area.

#### Social data mapping **Enhanced**

We enhanced our industry-leading Customer Mapping Tool to refresh 20 data sets. We also added a new social indicator showing levels of Universal Credit uptake to complement existing data on low income and long term unemployment. This data was shared with partners to inform both joint projects and COVID-19 responses.

Regular engagement with map users allows a feedback loop for data improvements.

#### Maintaining PSR data **Embedded**

Recognising the transitory nature of vulnerability, we are living up to our commitment of contacting customers every two years to ensure PSR data accuracy. This year, we cleansed 340,611 customer PSR records on our systems. Some of this was informed by supplier data, and we proactively updated 163,323 PSR records from our data cleanse activities and processes.



We used the mapping tool to help target areas for energy efficiency intervention in our HEEPS abs and ECO Flex programmes. We intend to use the map for a similar exercise again this year when applying for HEEP funding."

Fiona Boyd, Highland Council



## Measuring benefits

Our approach to measuring impact set out in Part 1 detailed how we combine different valuation tools to ensure we take actions that are the most appropriate and deliver maximum value to our customers and society. Below we demonstrate how we used our approach to inform our selection and measurement of key Part 3 initiatives.

### Case study Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) – Energy Advisers

In 2019-20, working with CAS, we developed a first-of-its-kind partnership to fund four specialist energy advisors to provide holistic, whole home support to vulnerable customers on matters including fuel poverty, energy efficiency and income maximisation.

The first year of the initiative proved to be very successful, delivering strong benefits to over 480 vulnerable households. We therefore invited CAS to provide a proposal to extend the project for another 12 months and demonstrate how they would incorporate lessons learned to enhance their approach this year.

We assessed their new proposal using our SROI tool and found that **for every £1 we invest in the partnership, an additional benefit of £3.57 will be delivered to our customers and society** over 5 years, through direct financial savings and health and wellbeing benefits. This strong value relative to other projects evaluated, coupled with positive feedback from our stakeholders, resulted in committing £140,000 of funding for a further year. Over this period CAS is forecast to support over 700 households in SHEPD, significantly increasing activity from last year.

### Case study Empowered by Energy

This year, we partnered with NEA and SGN to deliver a new initiative to support asylum seekers and refugees with fuel poverty and energy efficiency advice in both SHEPD and SEPD. Prior to delivery, we assessed the potential financial and social benefits we could deliver for this hard-to-reach group by training energy champions to give advice and aid refugees and asylum seekers in their community.

Our SROI analysis estimated that **for every £1 we invest in this initiative, we would deliver £4.53 benefit to these customers and society** over the next 5 years, by enabling this group to better manage their home energy and feel part of the community. This strong social return versus cost informed our decision to proceed with this initiative. So far, we have already supported 47 households in 2020-21, delivering £1.54 per £1 invested, which is ahead of our original forecast for this stage of the project.

For each of the initiatives listed in Part 3 we applied similar analysis and provide the SROI results alongside the project outcomes for 10 initiatives throughout this document.

### 3.3 Expanding on fuel poverty and energy efficiency activities

Fighting fuel poverty and helping more customers than ever to stay warm, safe and healthy for less was a key priority during 2020-21 with a marked increase in the scale and breadth of our activities.

In the Ofgem "Consumers' experiences with energy during the COVID-19 pandemic" survey, conducted in April 2020, 55% of respondents reported an increased use of energy in the home. This rose to 67% when we undertook our own research in September 2020. 46% of respondents to our survey exhibited a level of concern around their ability to heat their home.

COVID-19 has placed exceptional challenges on the finances of people across the UK, with stakeholders warning of increasing debt problems during 2021 and 2022 as a result.

Our partners, who work to help people out of fuel poverty, have faced exceptional challenges too.

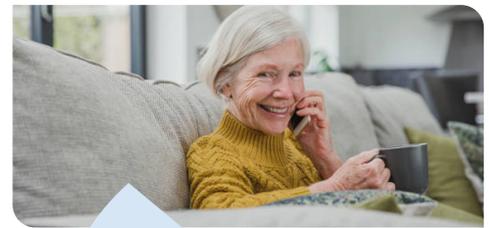
We have a clear and simple strategy for helping customers out of fuel poverty and enabling them to keep warm for less.

**Firstly: Referrals for customers we already engage with;**

We train our teams on fuel poverty, how to spot signs someone may need help and how to refer people for specialist, independent advice and support. Customers are called back directly from Home Energy Scotland or YES Energy Solutions.

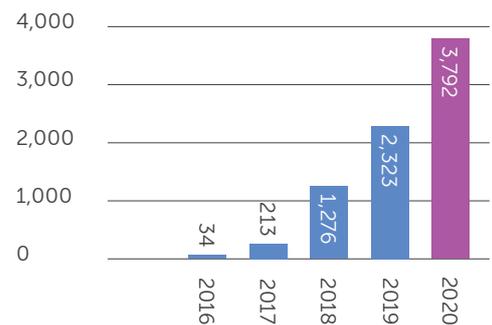
**Secondly: Outreach partnerships to support customers who are harder to reach;**

We work with partners who undertake outreach initiatives in communities we identify as having high fuel poverty rates. Our outreach partners are chosen especially to address wider social issues and add value to society as well as tackling fuel poverty and registering customers for the PSR.



**63.2%**  
increase in fuel poverty help this year

Total households helped with energy efficiency



**INCREASING ACCESS TO OUR ENERGY EFFICIENCY REFERRAL PROGRAMME Enhanced**

**We listened:**

Many stakeholders attending our Consumer Vulnerability workshop shared a deep concern over fuel poverty as a result of COVID-19, recognising it would only increase as the full socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 start to become apparent. In addition, in a survey of 1,600 customers, 41% of respondents reported spending between 5-8 hours more per day at home with 46% raising concerns over their ability to heat their homes over the winter period.

**We acted:**

We refreshed training for our customer-facing teams on fuel poverty and customer interactions for energy advice in an efficient and empathetic way. We also reviewed the referral routes, identifying gaps and ensuring these were effectively addressed.

	Online	On the phone	On a leaflet
<b>Gap</b>	No mention of energy efficiency at registration	Energy efficiency only mentioned if adviser recognised signs of fuel poverty	No mention of energy efficiency on PSR leaflets used by us or partners
<b>Solution</b>	Promote energy efficiency when customers register	Ask every customer if they would benefit from energy efficiency advice and enhance adviser training	New leaflets for us and partners with an energy efficiency page and an opt in option at registration
<b>Outcome</b>	Every customer registering online gets a pop up promoting free energy efficiency advice	Reminder embedded in our systems so customers are asked on every PSR call	Our new PSR leaflets promote, and accept consent
<b>Results</b>	1,038 customers referred to HES and YES: A 305% increase on last year		

**What we delivered for customers:**

1,038 customers referred to Home Energy Scotland and YES Energy Solutions to benefit from advice given on:

- Saving energy
- Switching energy suppliers

- Grants and loans available for insulation and heating systems
- Claiming Warm Home Discount and Winter Fuel Payment
- Smart meters and how to use them effectively
- Income maximisation



**£11.17**

social value created per £ spent over the next 5 years

## INCREASING FUEL POVERTY SUPPORT THROUGH INFORMED OUTREACH INITIATIVES

Enhanced Collaboration Hard to reach

### We listened:

Political stakeholders at our dedicated resilience roundtables told us to continue using trusted third parties to deliver fuel poverty support to our consumers. Additionally, several partners highlighted the importance of financial help post COVID-19.

### We acted:

We extended our commitment to six projects for a further year and introduced two new partnerships to support under represented communities.

### What we delivered for customers:

- 2,754 customers have benefited from support through our network of partners
- 1,279 consumers have registered to our PSR as a direct result
- £326,952 annual financial benefit for customers, 58% up on last year
- £9.49 social value forecast over the next 5 years per £ spent on initiatives measured
- 63% more households helped than last year

We are delighted to have the support of SSEN through this significant funding which enables our teams to provide additional support during a difficult time."

**Paul Bright**, CEO Citizens Advice Hampshire



### Our fuel poverty and energy efficiency outreach partnerships from this year

Partnership	Status	Households helped	Project Description	Annual Bill Saving	Social value created over the next 5 years per £ spent
Empowered by Energy	New	47	Supporting asylum seekers and refugees with energy efficiency advice in both SHEPD and SEPD	–	£4.53
Warm & Safe Wiltshire	Embedded	747	Targeted outreach with Local Authorities, health centres, Blue Badge application service, Fire Service and Citizens Advice	£71,826	£10.49
Action Hampshire/ CA Surrey	Embedded	116	Promoting energy efficiency support through foodbanks, family centres and job centres	£7,700	–
Footprint Trust	Enhanced	293	Enhanced to fund an adviser to meet increased demand on Isle of Wight	£28,000	£19.47
Home & Well	Embedded Enhanced	768	Working with Citizens Advice Hampshire, Southern Water and Portsmouth Water to provide energy efficiency and fuel poverty advice, targeted at those leaving hospital. Enhanced to include SGN	£9,940	£22.15
Warm Works	Embedded	49	Enabling fund to support customers in SHEPD benefit from energy efficiency measures	£15,865	£4.07
Citizens Advice Scotland – Energy Advisers	Embedded	726	Provision of holistic, whole home support on matters including fuel poverty, energy efficiency and income maximisation	£232,904	£3.57
CSE Enabling Fund	New	8	Enabling fund to support consumers in SEPD benefit from energy efficiency measures, including Green Home Grants	£64,793	£2.17
<b>Totals</b>		<b>2,754</b>		<b>£431,028</b>	<b>£9.49 on average</b>

## PROVIDING IN-DEPTH, HOLISTIC ADVICE THROUGH TRUSTED PARTNERS

Enhanced Collaboration Hard to reach

### We listened:

Stakeholders tell us that we should work with trusted third parties who already engage with consumers such as Citizens Advice.

We also know from extensive engagement that stakeholders support us in finding projects which can layer benefits and positively impact people's health and finances, and the NHS.

### We acted:

- Extended our Citizens Advice Scotland Energy Adviser Program for 12 months and supported move to remote advice
- Embedded our Citizens Advice Hampshire and NHS Home and Well Partnership, enhancing further with the addition of SGN as a partner

**£12.86**

average social value created per £ spent over the next 5 years on initiatives measured

### What we delivered for customers:

- over 1,490 customers received in depth support
- over 520 customers signed up to PSR as a direct result
- £242,844 client financial gain
- 97% clients improved peace of mind
- 66% of clients took action to save energy at home

"I just wanted to send an email to say how absolutely delighted and grateful I am to have received such outstanding support, advice and help from the adviser."

Customer

### Case study

### Client's vulnerability identified

A customer made contact through the energy advisor programme. The advisor quickly identified that English was not the client's first language and was concerned this may cause difficulties in confidently communicating with different agencies for support. Both the client and wife suffered from fatigue caused by long COVID-19 and were currently unemployed after contracting COVID-19 at work. The client presented with multiple debts and was on a low income.

Extensive advice was given on energy efficiency, wider financial matters, including housing, debt with utility companies, referrals to money services and a foodbank.

**205%**

year-on-year increase in number of customers supported

## 3.4 Widening our partnership network and collaborative activities

Our expertise in resilience and contingency planning, along with strong partnerships, pays off in meeting the complex needs of all our customer groups during unprecedented times.

In addition to the application of our partnership principles (see Part 1, page 09), to help identify reputable partners to expand our promotion of PSR, advice and services to vulnerable consumers, we also ensure data is used to make optimal choices.

Using our PSR data and customer mapping tool, we:

- 1 Identify the largest PSR gaps using PSR gap analysis
- 2 Locate areas of vulnerability geographically

During 2020-21, we have expanded our portfolio of partners to support even more customers in areas from fuel poverty to PSR registration.

### Case study

#### Using data to support consumers on the Isle of Wight **Enhanced**

##### We listened:

Data tells us that residents on the Isle of Wight experience above average rates of fuel poverty. We also know through our detailed PSR analysis there are significant opportunities to increase PSR registration in this geographical area. That is why, in 2020-21 we worked with The Footprint Trust to support the delivery of energy related advice through a free-to-attend, community event originally due to be held in May 2020.

##### We acted:

Upon the cancellation of the 2020 Riverfest community event, we agreed to repurpose our funding to support the employment of a member of staff for three months. This allowed for additional, dedicated support in the area of fuel poverty and wider debt management to a community which was in increasing need. An SROI of £19.47 has ensured funding to continue this work for 2021-22.

#### What we delivered for customers:

- 293 households supported
- 80 new PSR registrations
- £28,000 client financial gain achieved

## £19.47

social value created per £ spent over the next 5 years on initiatives measured

### LEADING ON CROSS INDUSTRY PSR PROMOTION

**New** **DNO First** **Collaboration**

#### We listened:

Through our ongoing work with NHS Scotland, they expressed a need for better awareness of the PSR and 105 for patients leaving hospital. They also expressed a clear desire to make it simple for staff to promote these services, ideally across the whole of Scotland.

#### We acted:



We worked with NHS Scotland to understand the most effective ways to promote the PSR and the 105 number to everyone receiving electrically powered medical equipment in our region.

Having agreed on both literature and a wipeable sticker which could be applied to electrically powered equipment, the impact of COVID-19 meant this had to be paused.

Further engagement with NHS Scotland's Incident Reporting and Investigation Centre led to a proposed expansion of the project. We proactively invited SP Energy Networks and Scottish Water to collaborate, creating a first-of-its-kind Scotland-wide initiative to help patients who use dialysis units which rely on water as well as power, allowing patients all over Scotland to benefit from additional support during a loss of power or water.

#### What we delivered for customers:

**We are the first DNO to offer a one-stop-shop for PSR registration across Scotland making it easier for partners to promote and customers to sign up. We hope this is a first step towards a UK wide PSR registration portal**

Priority Service Registers provide vital services for people in vulnerable situations across Scotland. Citizens Advice Scotland welcome SSEN's proactive approach to developing PSR Scotland. This type of integrated approach across sectors to simplify registration is very welcome and aligns with our thinking outlined in our 'Making it Easy' report. We encourage everyone to have a look and see if they or someone they know might be eligible."

**Kate Morrison**, Citizens Advice Scotland, Strategic Lead – Markets



#### Existing/Enhanced Partnerships



#### Newly Formed Partnerships



## ENABLING ALL CONSUMERS TO BENEFIT FROM THE GREEN RECOVERY New Collaboration Hard to reach

### We listened:

Launched in August 2020, the Green Homes Grant encouraged the adoption of Low Carbon Technology and energy efficiency measures in England and Wales. We surveyed 1,600 customers to test appetite for this scheme. 70% of respondents said there were barriers to participation, the main concern being the financial impact of preparatory works (30%), followed by physical barriers to preparatory work (20%).

### We acted:

Using our partnership principles we sought a partner in our SEPD licence area, with a shared vision to support those in fuel poverty, and the skills create and manage an enabling fund, similar to Warmworks in Scotland. CSE were identified and the proposal was tested. Forecast to support 20 consumers with a financial saving of over £90k, an SROI of £2.23 was calculated. Prior to commissioning the works, we facilitated a session between Warmworks, a trusted partner and provider of a similar scheme in Scotland, and CSE to share learnings from our enabling fund in SHEPD.

Learnings include embedding the workload with our partner organisations, reducing unnecessary work for SSEN, and freeing our time up to progress other projects.



I wanted to express our gratitude for the additional funding secured on behalf of our applicant. We have access to a funding pot to support emergency boiler replacement however, in some cases, the work to bring the installation to modern day standards is far greater than the Emergency Central Heating Offer pot will cover. The additional grant provided by the enabling works scheme enabled the project to go ahead. Without the additional funding the occupier was unable to proceed as he did not have the funds to cover the shortfall.

The occupier expressed to my team that he was extremely grateful as he had spent some months in the winter without heating or hot water and as a pensioner this is not healthy."

**Gary Robinson,**  
Managing Director, Aura Gas



# 12 to 1

ratio of funding  
unlocked for  
customers

### What we delivered for customers:

Our enabling fund is helping customers access schemes like HHCRO and the Green Homes Grant (ahead of its closure in March 2021) where circumstances or finances have stopped them getting the help they are entitled to.

#### Outcomes to date include:

- Working with 13 referral partners:
- Applications approved in Havant, Eastleigh, Chichester, Winchester and Arun

- Value of fund allocated = £5,097
- Funding unlocked by SSEN = £62,340
- Lifetime energy bill savings = £70,842
- Total financial benefit for vulnerable households = £133,182

# £2.17

social value created per £ spent over the next 5 years

## EXPANDING IN-DEPTH SUPPORT FOR CONSUMERS New Hard to reach

### We listened:

Stakeholders have universally highlighted the growing need to support consumers with energy efficiency and fuel poverty matters. This includes members of our strategic panels, attendees at our Consumer Vulnerability workshop and political stakeholders at our roundtable events.

### We acted:

Following a review of our current partnership portfolio, our CMT was used to identify geographical areas which experience higher than average rates of fuel poverty.

We reviewed the outcomes achieved for existing partnerships, highlighting good practices to be replicated.

We sought to find a partner who shared our vision to support consumers in vulnerable situations, had the geographical footprint, experience and would be trusted by our consumers.

Forecast to support  
**800+**  
households



Having identified an energy advisor programme with CSE, the proposal was reviewed against our measurement framework. We commissioned the project which is due to launch in early 2021-22.

### What we will deliver for customers:

During 2021-22 this project is forecast to deliver:

- Support for over 800 households
- £7.64 social value forecast over the next 5 years per £ spent



## POWERING CHANGE IN HARD TO REACH COMMUNITIES New Hard to reach

### We listened:

Our Inclusive Service Panels challenged us to do more to engage with hard to reach communities. Our Stakeholder Advisory Panel went further, highlighting refugee communities as a group which required particular support due to their lack of knowledge of the UK energy system.

### We acted:

We sought to find a partner that shared our value and vision to provide practical support for refugees in areas of energy efficiency and usage, safety and societal integration in matters external to the energy system too.

Having read with interest the UKPN project undertaken in 2019-20 to support similar communities, we engaged NEA to help design and deliver a project to support customers in both our licence areas.

Through these conversations, we found a fellow traveller in SGN, joining forces to support even more consumers.

### What we delivered for customers:

- 47 households, new to the UK, now have a good understanding of energy bills, energy efficiency, safety and how to live more comfortably in the UK communities

# £4.53

social value created per £ spent over the next 5 years

## 3.5 Driving forward PSR provision and promotion

This year, more than ever before, we needed to fully understand the changing needs of our customers and to safeguard the most vulnerable.

Our deep understanding of our diverse regions combined with our previous work to engage harder to reach communities, enabled us to move quickly to keep our customers, our teams and wider society safe and connected.

### EMPOWERED TO DO THE RIGHT THING FOR CUSTOMERS

Enhanced

Our continual training on consumer vulnerability, the PSR and mental health gives all our teams the confidence and empowers them with the flexibility to support customers whenever a need arises. Examples from this year include:

#### In the field

Our customer, Miss J, was caring for her mother who was receiving end-of-life care at home. During a power cut her mother's air bed was deflating causing worry about intense pain should her mother end up laying on the hard bed base. Our Fault Dispatcher, Claire, alerted local depot staff to the problem, who realised the fault would be fixed before a generator could be delivered and swifter action was needed. Steve, a Rapid Response Officer, was dispatched to help, connecting the customer's air bed to his van, re-inflating the bed, and staying with Miss J and her mother until the power was restored.

#### Over the phone

Hannah, a PSR team member, spoke to a customer who had complex needs; his neighbours both had Parkinson's and were in their 70s. Both properties were metered through them and were due to go off supply as part of a PSI. Hannah reassured the customer and organised a generator for them so neither property would lose power. The customer called to speak with our PSR team Manager, Rose, telling her: "Hannah has been caring, lovely and understanding. It is touching to have someone who cares, and she has gone above and beyond whilst treating me with respect and dignity. She is a good one and has done a superb job."

98%

of PSR customers felt reassured and less anxious during planned supply interruptions



### ADAPTING TO THE CHANGING AND COMPLEX NEEDS OF OUR CUSTOMERS, PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Enhanced

#### We listened:

SSEN has a critical role to play in keeping shielding and self isolating customers safe during a power cut. Stakeholders also wanted us to help the NHS and Public Health Authorities.

#### We acted:

##### We assessed at pace

- Immediate assessment of the range and complexity of social and health issues related to COVID-19
- Reviewed all planned service interruptions to understand the impact on customers and adjust our approach

##### We immediately

- Issued safety protocols to keep customers and colleagues safe
- Moved to reassure customers about the COVID-19 secure actions we have taken when we visit them or work in the community
- Mobilised outreach calls to elderly PSR customers most at risk of COVID-19 and calls to those in areas our data identified as having low resilience, high social isolation and a high percentage of elderly people who live alone
- Prioritised supply, connections and upgrades to critical locations including hospitals, care homes and essential services
- Added vaccination centres and storage facilities to the PSR

##### We rolled out

- Refreshed information regarding the use of temporary markers on PSR to customer-facing staff
- An enhanced PSR awareness campaign to be more focused on ensuring messaging remained effective through the use of new channels in light of changing consumer habits and lockdown restrictions
- A re-purposed Resilient Communities Fund to help community groups support people during the pandemic

- Facilitated virtual coffee mornings for Resilient Communities Fund recipients so they could share best practice with each other

#### We shared

- Our mapping data with partners such as NHS, Public Health England and Public Health Scotland to help identify priority areas and prioritise COVID-19 response
- The data for areas of high diversity and where language can be a barrier was also offered to UK Government by Rajnish Kashyap, (Hindu Council UK General Secretary and SSEN ISP Member) as a way of reducing the disparity of COVID-19 vaccinations amongst BAME Communities



SSEN's social vulnerability mapping capability is very impressive. It has the potential to inform and accelerate work to build a tool to map COVID-19 outbreaks against social vulnerability in order to aid Local Resilience Partnerships."

**Phil Couser**, Director of Data Driven Innovation at Public Health Scotland



#### What we delivered for customers:

- Over 6,000 welfare calls were made to our most vulnerable customers
- Over £320,000 of funding distributed to support 200 communities, from remote and rural islands in the Western Isles to the city of Portsmouth in Hampshire
- 96% of PSR customers who experienced an unplanned power interruption felt reassured and less anxious after our contact
- PSR category made available for customers who experience temporary vulnerability due to COVID-19
- Supported community groups to adapt to new working practices through the shared learnings at virtual coffee mornings

309

Covid vaccination centres added to our PSR



## STRATEGIC, TARGETED AND IMPACTFUL PSR PROMOTION Enhanced Hard to reach

### We listened:

We were challenged in 2019-20 to ensure that we were not just focusing on raising overall PSR registrations, but specifically targeting segments of customers who were underrepresented. Our Inclusive Service Panels (ISPs) also stressed the importance of promoting the benefits of PSR to healthcare professionals to support their patients. Our work in this area last year was highlighted as Industry Best Practice following the 2019-20 SECV Submission, giving us the confidence to embed and expand this approach in 2020-21.

### We acted:

Working with The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), our Customer Mapping Tool and our PSR data, we produced detailed reports showing the spread of vulnerabilities in each region and identifying geographic locations which are most likely to be underrepresented on our PSR.

CSE also reviewed poverty statistics for each of our regions, providing a clear picture of fuel poverty levels in the communities we serve; allowing us to more effectively promote the PSR via fuel poverty outreach activities in areas of highest need.

### What we delivered for customers:

Region	Population	PSR gap 2020-21 estimate	Percentage gap reduction in the last year
Ridgeway	1,378,386	33.7%	7.8%
Wessex	1,688,991	33.0%	8.2%
Thames Valley	2,377,295	32.6%	7.9%
South East	1,621,864	31.6%	8.2%
South Caledonia	584,894	28.3%	5.5%
North Caledonia	591,708	26.2%	8.3%
Highlands and Islands	265,228	23.4%	7.2%
All regions	8,508,366	31.5%	7.9%

This data produced by CSE confirms that our focus on reducing the PSR gap in SEPD is working, with the average gap reduction in SEPD being over 1% larger than for SHEPD; this is a reversal of what we have seen in the rest of ED1.

The top four customer areas of focus have increased by an average of 16.5%:

- Up 25% customers with mental ill health
- Up 20.8% customers where language can be a barrier

- Up 14.8% PSR1+ customers (Oxygen Use & Heart/Lung both up by over 26%)

- Up 5.5% customers with hearing loss

The exception to this progress is people leaving hospital, a temporary marker, which reduced by 15.3% due to planned operations being cancelled.

We have taken positive action by writing to customers before they are removed from the temporary leaving hospital marker to check if they need ongoing support for other reasons.

## ENSURING OUR PSR PROMOTION DIRECTLY TARGETS PSR GAPS Enhanced DNO First

### We listened:

Stakeholders at our September 2020 workshop asked that our work to promote PSR remained effective in light of changes brought about by COVID-19 and to focus on reaching people at home, when accessing healthcare and when online.

We were encouraged to build on our previous activity of geo-location and targeted web advertising, reaching new segments critical to closing PSR gaps.

### We acted:

Through re-evaluating our campaign we focused on:

- Areas with larger PSR gaps
- Areas with customers likely to be most at risk from COVID-19
- Diverse communities where language can be a barrier to close the PSR gap
- Areas around healthcare facilities including hospitals, health centres, pharmacies and GP surgeries being used for vaccinations

In addition, a refreshed channel mix to maximise effectiveness which led to:

**Increased opportunity for in home awareness via:**

- 16 key local radio stations with 2,166 slots, up 158% on the 840 slots last year
- 25 local and regional newspapers reaching over 600,000 customers
- A door drop to 122,176 homes in areas most at risk of COVID-19 with large PSR gaps

**Enhanced promotion to medical professionals and patients**

- Geo-location marketing at 294 hospitals and health centres, reaching health workers and patients leaving hospital
- Targeted web advertising reaching teachers, and parents of children at nurseries and pre-school across Scotland (231) and England (3,636)
- Distributing posters within 300m of healthcare facilities, pharmacies and vaccination centres

**New audiences reached through innovative use of digital services:**

- The first DNO to use Spotify reaching people with young children and elderly listeners with over 222,000 audio plays
- Leading the way with YouTube PSR promotion depending on age and viewing habits
- Improved promotion on news media sites, Google, Facebook and Instagram included translated content for Urdu, Bengali, Polish, Punjabi and Hindi speakers

### What we delivered for customers:

- 65,294 additional visits to our Winter Ready web pages
- An 82% increase in direct PSR registrations between September 2020 and November 2020
- A 116% increase in Power Track app downloads, often used by people who can't or don't want to call a contact centre

**1st DNO**  
to use Spotify for PSR promotion

1.7m

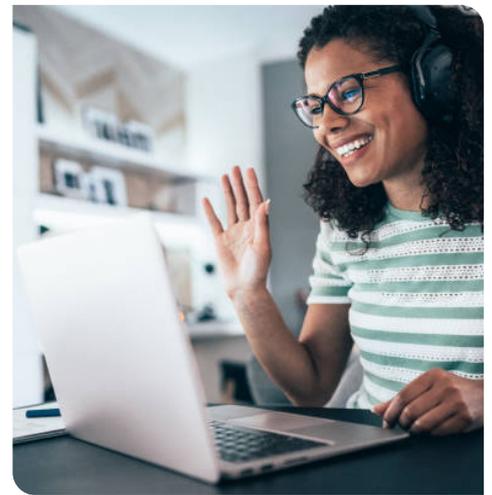
YouTube promotional video plays with 1.3m watched in full



## 3.6 Ensuring our services are inclusive and accessible now and in the future

The services we provide for customers in vulnerable situations must be tailored, specific, inclusive and accessible. Our diverse communities with ranges of societal issues mean that one size never fits all. As COVID-19 has quickened the move to online customer engagement we have assessed all our communications channels to help every customer engage with us quickly and confidently.

Stakeholders also highlighted how the mental health of many may have been adversely affected by the pandemic. This has been a particular area of focus for us. This year we've continued to deliver vulnerability training which started in 2020 and has been universally welcomed at all levels of the business, and have expanded our training programme to increase the focus on mental health.



### FRESH THINKING AND NEW CHALLENGE ON INCLUSIVE SERVICE Enhanced Hard to reach

During 2020-21, we appointed Trisha McAuley OBE as the new Chair of our Internal and External Inclusive Service Panels (ISPs). Trisha brings over 20 years' experience as a successful senior leader in consumer policy with a track record of high level, impactful and influential stakeholder engagement across a range of sectors, including the energy industry. Trisha replaces Richard Shakespeare, who remains as an External Panel member.

Trisha leads fellow members of our External Inclusive Service Panel – a group of experts with a working knowledge of issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion – and our Internal Inclusive Service Panel of passionate individuals from across SSEN's business. The panels were formed in 2017 to challenge thinking, provide innovative suggestions and practical ideas to further improve the inclusive nature of the services offered to our customers. This year we have refreshed the Terms of Reference to fix fuel poverty as a topic in every panel meeting and expanded the scope of the panels to include more focus on removing inequalities in the uptake of low carbon technologies.



I am impressed by the commitment and calibre of the stakeholder members and the SSEN members, who bring deep experience with consumers in vulnerable situations. All meeting actions are tracked and acted upon."



**Trisha McAuley OBE**  
Independent  
Chair of SSEN  
Inclusive Service  
Panels



Below is a selection of the challenges set by our ISPs in 2020-21.

We listened:	We acted:
<b>Support customers to make their homes more energy efficient</b>	Using Energy Savings Trust app to identify EPC data and used for planning fuel poverty activity and partnerships (helps customers save energy with cheap/no cost actions) and goes into more depth about how customers can make bigger changes to save money/improve SAP rating or become greener
<b>Share best practice and allow ease of access to resources</b>	The Customer Mapping Tool was shared proactively with 19 partners and external organisations. Full support was given and a feedback loop created for a continuous data set improvement Shared learning sessions were conducted between partners such as CSE and Warmworks to maximise the impact and effectiveness of new projects We continued to offer resources through the Partner Portal
<b>Continue to engage with hard to reach stakeholders including Faith Groups</b>	We set up a partnership with Groundwork/Green Doctor to work in areas where English is not so widely spoken in our Thames Valley region. We also partnered with National Energy Action and SGN to deliver the Empowered by Energy programme to refugees and asylum seekers in 47 homes
<b>Communicate with stakeholders during Covid</b>	Virtual Coffee Mornings held for Community Resilience Fund north and south recipients resulted in enhanced networking opportunities and supporting parish councils to develop Emergency Plans
<b>Continue to adapt our services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing customers</b>	BSL Video Relay Service embedded across platforms and non lingual contact points such as email, web forms, social media and Power Track kept or enhanced
<b>Expand on Mental Health awareness training</b>	Vulnerability and Mental Health E-learning training rolled out to 782 staff. 12 Thrive Webinars attended by over 200 colleagues 450 active users of the Thrive mental wellbeing app 10 Offload sessions from Rugby League Cares delivered to 202 colleagues 6 Menopause Cafes held with over 130 colleagues taking part 2 Andy's Mans Club sessions launched with over 100 colleagues in attendance

#### What we delivered for customers:

- Almost 1,000 colleagues received refreshed Mental Health training ensuring they are better equipped to support consumers
- Parish councils supported to develop Emergency Plans
- Virtual coffee mornings allowed shared learnings between previous community resilience fund recipients

## ACTING FAST TO PROTECT AND SUPPORT OUR MOST VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS New Hard to reach

### We listened:

In our survey of 1,600 customers, 41% of respondents reported spending between 5-8 hours more per day at home. 29% stated the increased time at home was due to shielding, whilst a further 36% stated reasons including furlough and normal social activities being stopped during lockdown. Many of our partners also noted concerns regarding the impact of social isolation on their service users.

### We acted:

We quickly set up outbound calling to customers who were most at risk from COVID-19, socially isolated and living alone.

Many customers were disconnected from their usual support networks. Conversations highlighted that many customers relied on others' internet access or library PCs. Other customers lost digital capability when they couldn't sort small IT issues without visits from relatives.

We mobilised a dedicated 100-strong team working quickly to proactively call customers, and their nominated contacts, who were identified using a combination of PSR data and our Customer Mapping Tool.

### What we delivered for customers:

- **Over 6,000 welfare calls made to vulnerable customers**
- **Signposting to local support groups**
- **Success at the Utility Week Awards, winning the "Keeping us Connected" category**



I was so impressed with the amount of people who wanted to help with the calls it really brought a sense of community as well as supporting our most vulnerable customers."

**Julie Walker**, COVID-19 Customer Care Team Lead



## Case study Effective support and interactions with consumers during COVID-19

One customer, who lives alone, is over 80 years old and having moved from America some years ago, has no family to help her during lockdown. Unable to get a food delivery from her supermarket and with no friends to assist, the call from SSEN couldn't have come at a better time. In addition to reassuring her and taking the time to listen, the member of the Customer Care Team was able to supply her with the priority number she needed to book a food delivery and provided her with other phone numbers she might need to help her with support from external agencies.

## MEETING THE STANDARD NATIONALLY, SETTING STANDARDS INTERNATIONALLY Embedded

In 2020-21 we were successfully assessed against the British Standard for Inclusive Service for the 6th year running.

We also continued to actively participate in the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) working group for new international inclusive service standards.

### What we delivered for customers:

**Our customers and partners can be assured of our continued commitment to the provision of high quality, inclusive products, services and partnerships to support consumers. In helping to create an international standard we are raising levels of service, inclusivity and accessibility across the world. We continue to be the only UK energy representative on this working group.**

SSEN has been a member of the ISO 22458 Consumer Vulnerability working group since its creation in 2018 and their first-hand experience of implementing BS 18477 Inclusive Service has been invaluable throughout the drafting process.

Insight from an SSEN perspective has enabled us to understand challenges faced by organisations, identify good practice and improve clarity of guidance. This will make it easier for businesses to implement real change, helping to improve outcomes for consumers in vulnerable situations."

**Julie Hunter**, Project Leader of ISO PC 311/ WG1



## EMBEDDING FAIRNESS IN NET ZERO New Innovation Collaboration

### We listened:

Our PSR survey showed that just 3% of PSR customers already own an electric vehicle, yet 28% expect to own one in the short to medium term.

Less than 1% of our customers already own heat pumps, this will need to rise to nearly 70% by 2050 if we are to reach net zero.

### We acted:

We aren't waiting to see who may get left behind, we're embedding fairness into the transition right now. We are taking a proactive and positive approach where plans are made with consumers and communities in mind from the outset; and opportunities to see everyone benefit from the transition are built in by design.

Our projects address issues beyond the energy industry and strive to address social issues by providing lasting community benefit.

## Case studies

Our projects, innovations and strategies are identifying the barriers and removing them. Five examples of this are:

**Equal EV:** We're working with Disabled Motoring UK to help the 2.3 million disabled motorists by addressing issues with charging at home, in the street and in car parks. This has resulted in a new fully funded innovation project to help find and overcome these barriers.

**Smart and Fair with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and WPD:** We're leading the industry in assessing customers' ability to participate in the smart grid of the future, identifying who is at risk of being left behind and removing barriers. The outcomes so far were shared for the first time at our Vulnerability Workshop in September 2020 by Simon Roberts, CSE CEO.

**Industry-first step publishing regional energy efficiency forecasts:** Our reports this year highlighted that: Over 60% of homes in Portsmouth, Southampton, Bournemouth and Oxford need better energy efficiency to reach EPC rating C and over 50% in Aberdeen and Dundee. We're using this to further embed fairness into our future energy scenarios.

**Heat Strategy:** The new SSEN heat strategy is based around fairness. Stakeholders endorsed our plans to tackle fuel poverty in remote off gas grid communities first by starting mass heat pump installations where it will help the coldest homes more quickly.

**Our EV Strategy** includes detailed plans of how we will protect disabled drivers, vulnerable customers, prioritise essential services and incorporate safeguards into flexibility services.



PRINCIPAL PARTNER SSE  
**UN CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
CONFERENCE  
UK 2021**  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY



Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks is a trading name of: Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution Limited Registered in Scotland No. SC213459; Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc Registered in Scotland No. SC213461; Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution plc Registered in Scotland No. SC213460; (all having their Registered Offices at Inveralmond House 200 Dunkeld Road Perth PH1 3AQ); and Southern Electric Power Distribution plc Registered in England & Wales No. 04094290 having their Registered Office at No.1 Forbury Place, 43 Forbury Road, Reading, RG1 3JH which are members of the SSE Group

[www.ssen.co.uk](http://www.ssen.co.uk)