

2015-2023

Western Power Distribution

RIIO-ED1 Business Plan Commitments Report Year Two - 2016/17

31 October 2017

Social Obligations

Social obligations

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8 Social obligations

- 8.1** In delivering electricity to 7.8 million customers, we provide a range of services to fulfil our social obligations.
- 8.2** WPD broadly defines 'social obligations' as the role we have as a Distribution Network Operator to help customers in vulnerable circumstances.
- 8.3** This is informed by Ofgem's definition of vulnerability as circumstances that make an individual 'significantly less able than a typical consumer to protect or represent their own interests; and/or significantly more likely to experience detriment, or for that detriment to be more substantial.'
- 8.4** In RIIO-ED1, WPD's social obligations outputs are in four themes.
- Improve understanding of vulnerability.
 - Improve the data held on the Priority Service Register.
 - Improve the services provided for vulnerable customers.
 - Address fuel poverty by supporting customers to access key information.

Regulatory framework:

- 8.5** From 2015/16 Ofgem extended the scope of the existing Stakeholder Engagement incentive to cover Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability – referred to as SECV. The SECV incentive aims to encourage network companies to engage proactively with stakeholders in order to anticipate their needs and deliver a consumer focused, socially responsible and sustainable energy service. Rewards are available to network companies who can demonstrate high quality activities against set criteria.
- 8.6** WPD's SECV submissions for 2016/17 can be found via the following weblink.
- www.westernpower.co.uk/About-us/Stakeholder-information/Stakeholder-Reports.aspx
- 8.7** The submissions provide information explaining WPD's approach to social obligations as well as broader information on stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability and the positive outcomes that we have delivered for customers.
- 8.8** Ofgem's expert panel reviewed the submissions and awarded WPD's actions a rating of 8.53 out of 10. This is the highest score awarded in 2016/17, significantly higher than all other electricity distribution network operators (DNOs), gas distribution network operators, gas transmission operators and electricity transmission operators. This is the sixth consecutive year that WPD has been rated number one in the industry for stakeholder engagement.

Overview of social obligations outputs

Improving understanding of vulnerability		
60	Work with expert partners to improve our understanding of the needs of vulnerable customers.	We worked with a wide range of expert partners and were accredited with the British Standards Institute (standard BS18477), which specifies requirements for responding to vulnerable customers.
61	Train staff to recognise the signs of vulnerability.	We provided specialist training to Priority Service Register (PSR) teams and contact centre staff. We completed training for field staff on supporting vulnerable customers in three of the four licence areas.

Improving the data held on the Priority Service Register		
62	Contact vulnerable customers at least once every two years to check the details we hold on the Priority Service Register.	We contacted 691,499 PSR customers during 2016/17.
63	Improve the quality of Priority Service Register data by working with other agencies and sharing information.	We developed new methods for referring people to the Priority Service Register, with a focus on direct sign-ups. We standardised and simplified methods across our 34 referral networks.
64	Co-ordinate meetings with suppliers to agree criteria for vulnerability.	We agreed 27 new 'common needs codes' for use across the industry.

Improving the services provided for vulnerable customers		
65	Raise awareness of the Priority Service Register.	We worked with a range of organisations, including water utilities and gas distribution networks, to raise awareness of the PSR.
66	Make 10,000 crisis packs available.*	To date, we have issued 3,580 crisis packs over the RIIO-ED1 period. We have a new process for field staff to issue packs.
67	Contact all customers who depend on a power supply for medical reasons every three hours during power cuts.**	During power cuts we prioritise contacting customers who depend on a power supply for medical reasons. We made 115,747 calls to PSR customers (including those who depend on a power supply for medical reasons) during power cuts.
68	Continue to provide practical support through the British Red Cross and other organisations as appropriate.	We provided British Red Cross support during 23 prolonged power cuts. This was an increase from 2015/16 as a result of training field staff on the support which is available to vulnerable customers.
69	Ask for feedback from vulnerable customers about our service.	We achieved customer satisfaction ratings of 9.13 out of 10 from customers on the PSR who had received a routine call to check their personal details, and 9 out of 10 for those referred for advice on fuel poverty.
70	Develop ways of sharing information with local resilience forums.	We worked with 19 forums across our four licence areas. We launched a new £10,000 fund through local resilience forums to support businesses to plan for power cuts.

Reduce fuel poverty by supporting customers to access help		
71	Build a database of regional agencies we can refer customers to for help.	There are fuel poverty projects in all our areas, working with a network of support agencies. During 2016/17, we organised best practice events with all our partners to share learning.
72	Work with partners to develop links to and from our website.	Details on our fuel poverty projects and links to partner organisations are available on our website.
73	Develop joint information and awareness campaigns, and co-ordinate with partners to provide customers with help.	We have four 'Power Up' fuel poverty schemes to support customers who are facing fuel poverty. We supported 7,205 customers to save £1.4million a year.
74	Provide fuel poverty training to our staff who have contact with members of the public.	We provided field staff and staff in our contact centre with customised fuel poverty training. We completed vulnerable customer training for field staff in three of the four licence areas.

75	Use data analysis to help identify areas with a high concentration of vulnerable households.	In 2017 we used data on social factors such as benefit claims and long-term disability (collected from 41 different data sources) to target our projects to areas with the greatest need.
76	Develop local outreach services.	'Affordable Warmth' schemes have now been set up across all four licence areas. We created a Local Action fund to identify new ways to tackle fuel poverty and vulnerability. We helped 4,595 customers to save £1.7million.

* Targets are for the full eight year RIIO-ED1 period, not for a discrete year

** Target to be achieved each year of RIIO-ED1

Improving understanding of vulnerability

- 8.9** Traditionally WPD has focused on the specific obligations we have to customers with health issues who may have a greater vulnerability during power cuts (e.g. those using dialysis machines). Stakeholder engagement has influenced what we do and our approach has been widened, leading to the introduction of a Consumer Vulnerability Strategy in 2013.
- 8.10** The Consumer Vulnerability Strategy encapsulates the company's decision to address social obligations for a broader group of vulnerable customers including customers who have transient vulnerabilities to a power cut (e.g. customers who have recently left hospital) and customers struggling with energy affordability.
- 8.11** The varied interactions that we have with customers as a DNO mean that we may identify individuals that are vulnerable or have social issues. To help these customers we have developed a range of services.
- 8.12** Central to WPD's Consumer Vulnerability Strategy is the Priority Service Register (PSR). The PSR is a free, confidential, register of customers who require priority assistance, for reasons including:
- medical dependencies on electricity;
 - disability;
 - communication needs;
 - age; or
 - temporary vulnerabilities.
- 8.13** The PSR enables WPD to offer targeted services such as welfare support during power cuts and proactive notification ahead of planned work.
- 8.14** During RIIO-ED1, we are improving our understanding of vulnerability to influence how we interact with vulnerable customers and to refine the services that we provide.
- 8.15** Our strategy is reviewed on an annual basis, together with our detailed action plan containing timescales, outcomes, costs and owners. Over the last three years we have concentrated on developing processes and establishing key projects and partnerships. For 2016/17 we have widened our approach to increasingly focus on the customer perspective and understanding the value to our customers of the services that we provide.

Output (60) Work with expert partners to improve our understanding of the needs of vulnerable customers.



- 8.16** WPD uses input from a variety of social groups through stakeholder engagement and partnership projects to help to understand vulnerability.
- 8.17** Working with a variety of third parties ensures that we:
- consider a variety of viewpoints;
 - are aware of evolving issues impacting stakeholders;
 - overcome areas where we lack core expertise; and
 - improve customers' awareness of the services WPD can provide.

The Customer Panel

- 8.18** The Customer Panel is hosted by WPD's Chief Executive and is a key part of our engagement programme. The panel brings together expert representatives from the major stakeholder groups and entrusts them with full transparency in relation to WPD's performance and future plans. This enables them to critically evaluate our performance, make informed decisions about our activities and provide strategic steer.
- 8.19** The Customer Panel consists of 34 permanent members who meet quarterly. Members include an NHS trust, Warm Wales, the National Energy Foundation, British Red Cross, Citizens Advice and Energy Saving Trust, Parish Councillors, a gas distribution network (Cadent, formerly National Grid) and a supplier (British Gas). The diversity of the Customer Panel ensures that we are provided with a balanced representation of the views of our stakeholders.
- 8.20** The Customer Panel includes an in-depth surgery session on 'social obligations' at every meeting. The outcomes from meetings held during 2016/17 included the following.
- The introduction of a revised approach to PSR records – removing those records where we have had no contact from customers for three years. The panel recommended a clear process for removing records, ensuring that customers are provided with the opportunity to make contact or re-register as required.
 - The expansion and renewal of four fuel poverty outreach schemes (referred to as 'Affordable Warmth').
 - The development of a £90,000 fuel poverty local action fund.

Stakeholder workshops

- 8.21** WPD hosts annual stakeholder workshops which provide the opportunity to gain feedback on activities and proposals from a range of interested stakeholders and to ensure that our approach to vulnerability is on track.
- 8.22** The workshops held in January 2017 were attended by 270 individuals representing stakeholder groups that included local authorities, domestic customers, consumer bodies, businesses, developers, utilities and other DNOs.
- 8.23** The agenda for these workshops included a specific surgery on our approach to social obligations, testing stakeholder views on our proposals.
- 8.24** Summary findings reports from the workshops, including WPD's action plan to address the key feedback received, can be found at the link below.

www.westernpower.co.uk/About-us/Stakeholder-information.aspx

Working with partner organisations

- 8.25** Working with partner organisations helps us to identify vulnerable customers and assist with social issues facing them.
- 8.26** We specifically support a range of partnership projects focused on issues of consumer vulnerability and fuel poverty.
- 8.27** In 2016/17 a joint utilities event called 'Stronger Together' was launched, bringing together the major utility providers in South Wales. WPD joined forces with Welsh Water and Wales and West Utilities, together with Ofgem and Citizens Advice to discuss how communities and public and private sector organisations can work together to support vulnerable customers. We are now reviewing opportunities for collaborative action such as the sharing of PSR data.

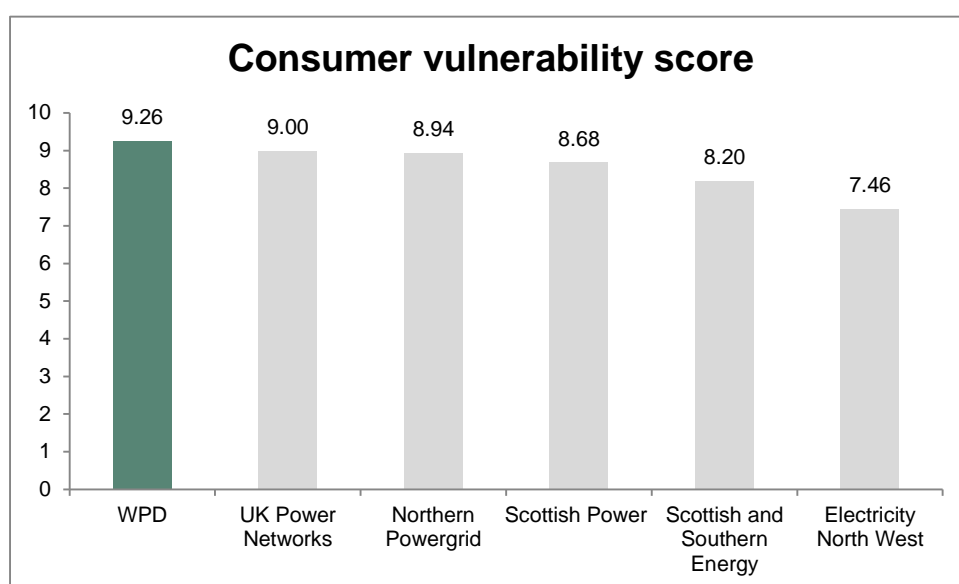
External validation of our approach

8.28 Our success in continuing to develop our understanding of vulnerability has been measured through different types of external validation, as follows.

Ofgem Consumer Vulnerability Assessment

8.29 As part of Ofgem's annual Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability (SECV) Incentive, the consumer vulnerability programmes of all Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) undergo an external, independent audit assessment using a balanced score card. This assesses how well we understand vulnerability and the effectiveness of our actions.

8.30 In 2016/17 WPD was rated the top performer in the industry for the specific element 'Quality of the network company's strategy to address consumer vulnerability and the quality of outcomes delivered'. The following chart compares the scores for the customer vulnerability part of the SECV assessment, showing that WPD retained the highest scores across the DNOs.



Customer Service Excellence Standard

8.31 Each year WPD's customer service is assessed against the government's Customer Service Excellence standard, part of which tests our customer insight, including the services we provide for vulnerable customers.

8.32 In March 2017, we were successfully reaccredited against the Customer Service Excellence Standard and achieved two additional 'Compliance Plus' ratings including one for our stakeholder engagement processes. In total we achieved 'Compliance Plus' ratings for 38 out of the 57 standards (achieving compliance in the rest). For the second year running WPD was the highest scoring organisation out of the 237 that were audited.

8.33 The final assessment report judged WPD to have 'an in-depth understanding of its customers that has enabled it to design and provide services that meet the needs of the full range of customer groups'.

Standard for inclusive service provision

- 8.34** The British Standards Institute (BSI) – BS18477: Standard for Inclusive Service Provision specifies requirements for identifying and responding to consumer vulnerability. It recognises that vulnerability is dynamic and multi-dimensional and may vary over time and in different settings.
- 8.35** WPD uses assessment against the standard to improve the ability of the organisation to recognise and address the broad and complex nature of consumer vulnerability, and as a result provide flexible and inclusive services. We put forward all key, new projects developed over the previous 12 months for the BSI to assess in terms of project effectiveness and inclusivity.
- 8.36** Each year, BSI undertakes a two day audit of WPD, assessing processes against 36 elements in the standard. The audit critically evaluates whether WPD's services effectively address consumer vulnerability, which includes demonstrating that:
- policies and processes have been implemented to help employees to identify situations when consumers might be vulnerable;
 - front-line staff have been trained and are empowered to act; and
 - new and flexible services have been developed for customers.
- 8.37** In March 2017, WPD was assessed as being fully compliant with all aspects of the standard for the fourth consecutive year.

Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) independent audit

- 8.38** We commission the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) to undertake an annual independent audit of our social obligations programme to assess whether we are addressing relevant social issues in a strategically coherent way. We have done so annually since 2014, prior to the introduction of the SECV incentive in 2015.
- 8.39** The approach, utilising a balanced scorecard, formed the basis of the consumer vulnerability assessment criteria adopted by Ofgem.
- 8.40** This mechanism helps to enhance our understanding of vulnerability and identify improvements to our programme. We were reassessed in March 2017.

Louder than Words charter mark

- 8.41** 'Louder than Words' is a nationally recognised accreditation for organisations striving to offer excellent levels of service and accessibility for customers who are deaf or have hearing loss.
- 8.42** Assessment is carried out against 10 quality standards and WPD has achieved the 'Louder than Words' charter mark, providing further assurance that our services are accessible.

Output (61) Train staff to recognise the signs of vulnerability.



8.43 In 2013 WPD established a dedicated team of staff focused on updating and maintaining WPD's Priority Service Register (PSR). This team is at the forefront of our work with vulnerable customers, it has the objective of contacting PSR customers to:

- update customer records;
- remind customers about WPD and how to contact us;
- offer power cut resilience advice; and
- offer referrals for practical fuel poverty support.

8.44 The process for contacting PSR customers was designed with the help of our Customer Panel. It has no scripts or time quotas for calls.

8.45 The PSR team is based across our Contact Centres in East Midlands and South Wales. The call handlers have received specialist empathy skills training and attend a range of training and development events to build their understanding of the needs of vulnerable customers. In 2016/17 this included sessions with Dementia UK for East Midlands staff. South Wales staff attended sessions with the Mid and West Wales Fire Service and the mental health charity Mind.

8.46 In addition, all Contact Centre staff in the East Midlands have undertaken specialist training with Hijinx Theatre – a company that employs actors with learning disabilities. Staff participated in bespoke role play sessions which enabled them to build their confidence in communicating effectively with individuals from a range of backgrounds. Staff in South Wales attended the same training in 2015/16.

8.47 Refresher training is provided to all Contact Centre staff each year. In 2016/17 this included an update on the PSR process and the activities of the PSR team.

8.48 In 2015/16 we initiated a programme to train all field staff to recognise vulnerability. In 2016/17 we started the process to train our 4,700 field staff in the following.

- Identifying customers in potentially vulnerable situations.
- Adding customers to the PSR.
- Arranging British Red Cross welfare support.
- Distributing crisis packs.

8.49 All staff in the East Midlands, West Midlands and South Wales attended the training in 2016/17; sessions will continue to be held during 2017/18 for field staff in the South West licence area. We have already begun to see the benefits of these sessions; as an example the number of British Red Cross call outs during prolonged power cuts has increased from five in 2015/16 to 23 in 2016/17.

Improving the data held on the Priority Service Register

Output (62) Contact vulnerable customers at least once every two years to check the details we hold on the Priority Service Register.



- 8.50** It is important that the data held on WPD's Priority Service Register (PSR) is accurate so that advice and practical support can be effectively deployed to those customers most in need.
- 8.51** Most historic data has been added to the PSR via notification from electricity suppliers and over time some of the data held has become out of date.
- 8.52** We therefore undertake a range of activities to improve the data we hold on the PSR including extensive data cleansing, working with suppliers, using data models to identify vulnerable customers and working with other agencies.
- 8.53** Our systems prompt us to contact vulnerable customers every two years. In 2016/17 we proactively contacted 691,499 PSR customers, successfully updating 50.3% of records. 575,752 customers were contacted via WPD's data cleanse teams, and 115,747 were contacted via proactive calls to individuals on the PSR during power cuts.
- 8.54** We contact customers to update their details but also take the opportunity to offer advice to assist customers to improve their resilience to a power cut should such an event occur. Priority is placed on the quality, rather than quantity, of calls. There are no time limits for a conversation. We treat calls with sensitivity and we listen.
- 8.55** In order to ensure we are getting it right, we carry out annual, independent satisfaction research to measure the effectiveness of our engagement and identify improvements. In 2016/17 PSR customers who undertook a survey rated our service as 9.13 out of 10.
- 8.56** Whilst we attempt to make contact with customers on the PSR every two years sometimes we don't get a response. Our initial approach to this was a conservative policy of keeping non respondents on the PSR. During 2016/17 we reviewed this approach with the Customer Panel and at our annual Stakeholder Workshops. As a result we have introduced a new data removal policy for records where we have had no contact with the customer for three years. The Panel recommended that we write to every customer seeking a response within 28 days before their removal from the register, clearly detailing how the customer could re-register at a future date if necessary. This process has now been initiated and we anticipate that it could result in the removal of over 350,000 redundant records. This will enable us to focus our efforts on those customers most in need of our support.

Output (63) Improve the quality of Priority Service Register data by working with other agencies and sharing information.



8.57 We actively work with other agencies to:

- promote the PSR;
- share information with others already working with vulnerable customers where those customers may be eligible to join the PSR; and
- improve the quality of the data that we currently hold.

Informed consent and data sharing

8.58 Where customers have joined the PSR via their supplier they are often unaware that their data has been shared and the benefits of being registered have not necessarily been explained.

8.59 We are therefore working hard to increase direct registrations with WPD, as this provides the opportunity to explain the services that WPD can provide.

8.60 In 2015/16 we introduced a new initiative referred to as informed consent. We work with a network of partner organisations that have access to a range of customer groups. These partner organisations are well placed to discuss the PSR with customers directly and to identify whether the customer is happy for the agency to add them to the PSR.

8.61 We have partnerships in place with 34 organisations including local authorities, energy advice/consumer bodies and emergency resilience services. Examples of large national partners include the British Red Cross, Age Cymru/UK, Citizens Advice and the Energy Saving Trust. We also work with local schemes such as Cardiff Care and Repair, Nottingham City Homes and the Papworth Trust.

8.62 During 2016/17 we worked to standardise the approach taken by all our partners and to simplify the sign up process. A review of all sign up methods identified that registering via WPD's online form was the most effective and user friendly mechanism; as a result we designed a new app for use on mobile phones and tablets. This app was downloaded 4,220 times in the first month.

8.63 Our stakeholder engagement suggested that our Priority Service programme should be more targeted. In 2016/17 we used social indicator mapping to identify areas with high PSR eligibility but current low levels of sign up. We have ensured that the locations of our PSR referral networks align to these areas and the partners we have selected are best suited to target the demographic groups that we have identified as underrepresented.

8.64 WPD has a number of fuel poverty outreach projects in place. Whilst the primary driver of these projects is to provide support for energy affordability, we ensure that projects also address power cut vulnerability, the provision of resilience advice and promoting the PSR. For example, WPD's 'Affordable Warmth' project, which offers fuel poverty support via a consortium of partner organisations, includes a remit to make vulnerable customers aware of the PSR.

8.65 During 2016/17 WPD engaged with Ofgem and the UK Regulator's Network to establish processes to enable us to share customer data with water companies. As a precursor to sharing data we engaged with every water company in our region and introduced links online to enable customers who have joined WPD's PSR to go directly to their water company's page to join their equivalent register.

8.66 In 2015/16 we initiated a trial with National Grid Gas Distribution (now called Cadent as a result of a change in ownership) and Wales and West Utilities in three locations to obtain informed consent from eligible PSR customers during gas works. Once consent is obtained WPD writes to the customers to explain our role, give advice and provide a direct dial number to use in emergencies. This has now been expanded as business as usual across all of our regions. In 2016/17 we received 2,126 referrals from gas distribution networks as a result.

Output (64) Co-ordinate meetings with suppliers to agree criteria for vulnerability.



- 8.67** As members of the Energy Networks Association (the industry body for UK electricity transmission and distribution) WPD has been working with other DNOs, Suppliers, Ofgem, charities and consumer bodies to agree a new, common set of PSR needs codes.
- 8.68** WPD played a lead role in the work undertaken by the Safeguarding Customers Working Group. The group has agreed 27 new common needs codes to be used by all parties nationally to identify and register customers. The new codes recognise the multi-dimensional nature of vulnerability and replace categorisations which were over 15 years old. The new codes came into effect for all DNOs, gas networks and suppliers in June 2017. Two-way automated data flows between suppliers and DNOs (of new and updated PSR records) will replace existing manual processes.
- 8.69** WPD drafted the data sharing privacy impact assessments that will be used by all companies and wrote and negotiated the formal change requests required to amend industry data flows.

Improving the services provided for vulnerable customers

8.71 Work has been undertaken during 2016/17 to develop and improve the services provided for vulnerable customers. This includes:

- raising awareness of the PSR and the services available to those who are registered;
- assisting vulnerable customers to be prepared for a power cut;
- assisting vulnerable customers during a power cut; and
- assisting vulnerable customers during an emergency.

Output (65) Raise awareness of the Priority Service Register.



8.72 In addition to the proactive work that we undertake with partners to identify vulnerable customers we also take steps to raise awareness of the PSR.

8.73 WPD's annual newsletter 'Power For Life' was sent to all 7.8m customers in September 2016 promoting the PSR, who is eligible and how to register.

8.74 13,000 leaflets promoting the PSR and providing advice on power cuts were sent to customers during 2016/17, these included a freepost registration form to provide an easy mechanism for customers to join the register.

8.75 In January 2017 we distributed 250,000 pharmacy dispensary bags promoting the PSR and the new national '105' power cut line. Following the pharmacy bag promotion a survey of thirty pharmacists found that 97% would recommend the PSR to their customers.

8.76 In December 2016 WPD led a second parliamentary reception focused on gaining feedback on our approach to the future of electricity networks. More than 70 MPs and key stakeholders from Ofgem and DECC attended the event and were asked to help promote the PSR. Following the event MPs were sent a bespoke press release that they could use to promote the register. An additional 56,731 customers joined WPD's PSR in the 2 months after the MP event – a 27% increase on the same period the previous year.

8.77 WPD staff who interact with customers are a valuable resource for promoting awareness of the PSR. Training for Contact Centre teams has been followed by training for field staff to ensure that they are able to identify, register and support PSR customers. By the end of March 2017 field staff in the East Midlands, West Midlands and South Wales had received training. Training will continue within the South West licence area in 2017/18.

Output (66) Make 10,000 crisis packs available.



8.78 Direct assistance for customers is made available (as required) through the distribution of crisis packs.

8.79 WPD committed to distributing 10,000 crisis packs during RIIO-ED1. In 2016/17 we distributed 2,609 packs, with a cumulative total so far for the RIIO-ED1 period of 3,580 packs.

8.80 Crisis packs include a flask, torch with batteries, gloves, a hat, a reusable hand-warmer, a foil blanket and information leaflets. Digital phones reliant upon mains power may not work during a power cuts so we provide analogue telephones to vulnerable customers who need them. Crisis packs are distributed in a range of ways.

- Contact Centre staff can arrange for a pack to be provided if they feel that it would be beneficial as a result of discussions during a customer call.

- Field staff can distribute packs as a result of a site visit and discussion with customers.
- Partners such as the British Red Cross and Age UK are provided with stocks of crisis packs to distribute to customers where they identify a requirement.
- Local distribution teams are provided with stocks of crisis packs that can be distributed as required if an outage lasts longer than six hours.

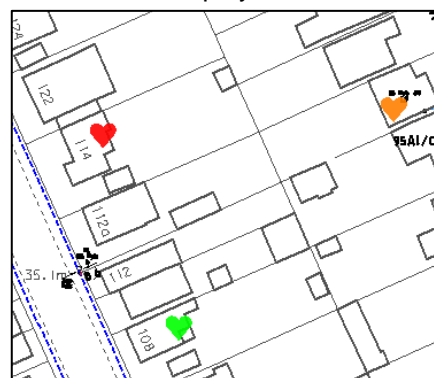
Output (67) Contact all customers who depend on a power supply for medical reasons every three hours during power cuts.



8.81 Where an outage is planned the project manager arranging the shutdown is responsible for ensuring that customers who are medically dependent on electricity are contacted in advance, checking that they have received the standard shutdown notification letter (used for all customers). This process allows WPD to identify any customers who may require additional support such as a site visit in advance to discuss the outage or the provision of a generator during an outage.

8.82 The mapping systems available to field staff have been improved to provide engineers with clearer data about vulnerable customers. Previously all PSR records were displayed on network maps using one common symbol, during 2016/17 this was amended with customers groups identified as follows.

- Red symbol – electrically dependent customers where an outage could be life threatening.
- Amber – customers who could experience discomfort, distress and inconvenience as a result of an outage.
- Green – customers who may require additional information but have no immediate dependency, this might include elderly customers or those with special communication needs.



8.83 For unplanned outages, WPD committed to contacting medically dependent customers within the first three hours of a prolonged power cut to provide updates on power restoration times and to identify if additional support or further contact is required. It is not always clear from the start of an outage that a power cut will be prolonged. To avoid contacting customers unnecessarily, when power may be restored in a short time period, Contact Centre staff are prompted (via an automated system) to call medically dependent customers three hours into the power cut. Calls are only made between 9am to 8pm to avoid disrupting customers during unsocial hours.

8.84 During 2016/17 we contacted all 1,203 medically dependent customers affected by a power cut that lasted more than three hours. This figure reflects the number of customers where contact was attempted, including those who did not answer a phone call.

Output (68) Continue to provide practical support through the British Red Cross and other organisations as appropriate.



8.85 In 2016/17 we proactively contacted 115,747 vulnerable customers on the PSR to offer reassurance, advice and the latest restoration information during power cuts. This removed the need for vulnerable customers to contact us.

8.86 During prolonged outages we request assistance from partner organisations to provide support to customers. For RIIO-ED1 we proposed to continue to work with the British Red Cross and the Royal Voluntary Service for these services, but the Royal Voluntary Service ceased to provide the support we require, we therefore established a new arrangement with the Nationwide Caterers Association.

8.87 Contact Centre staff have the facility to contact the British Red Cross to assist with the provision of warm meals, drinks, crisis packs and general welfare checks during an outage. Use of the British Red Cross can also be prompted by field staff who are concerned about customers and in 2016/17 they provided support at 23 prolonged power cut incidents.

8.88 Our agreement with the Nationwide Caterers Association enables us to provide hot food and drinks for communities impacted by prolonged power cuts. However there have been no occasions where this was needed in 2016/17. During RIIO-ED1 we will randomly carry out trial call-outs to ensure that the service remains effective.

8.89 WPD liaises with oxygen providers to obtain postcode data of individuals who are reliant on oxygen supplies. In the event of a power cut, WPD uses this information to automatically flag that these customers are affected so that a proactive call can be made to provide information on restoration times and to check if the individual will require additional support.

8.90 In 2016/17 we launched a project designed to utilise technology to support PSR customers. WPD has designed a plug-in-device which will notify us in real time when a vulnerable customer has a power cut, much as smart meters will do when SMETS2 meters are rolled out. Running a trial of 250 devices will allow us to understand the procedures required for vulnerable customers once smart meter outage notification is fully operational.

8.91 We seek to improve the services that we provide to customers and this includes assisting partners and competitors to deliver benefits to customers. In January 2017 our engagement with a major Independent Distribution Network Operator (IDNO) led us to agree a new arrangement to extend British Red Cross support to customers of this IDNO. If the IDNO identifies a vulnerable customer affected by either an electricity or gas outage on their networks, WPD arranges British Red Cross support through our established call out arrangements.

Providing assistance during system emergencies

8.92 System emergencies such as damage caused by severe weather can leave vulnerable customers without power for prolonged periods of time.

8.93 WPD has a range of vehicles suitable for operating in severe weather conditions that can be used to reach vulnerable customers to provide support. This includes use of the WPD helicopter fleet (where weather conditions permit flying), boats and amphibious vehicles.



8.94 In 2015/16 the key capabilities of the Helicopter Unit were extended to include:

- delivery of provisions to remote customers who are without power;
- customer evacuation; and
- delivery of high volume pumps and generation.

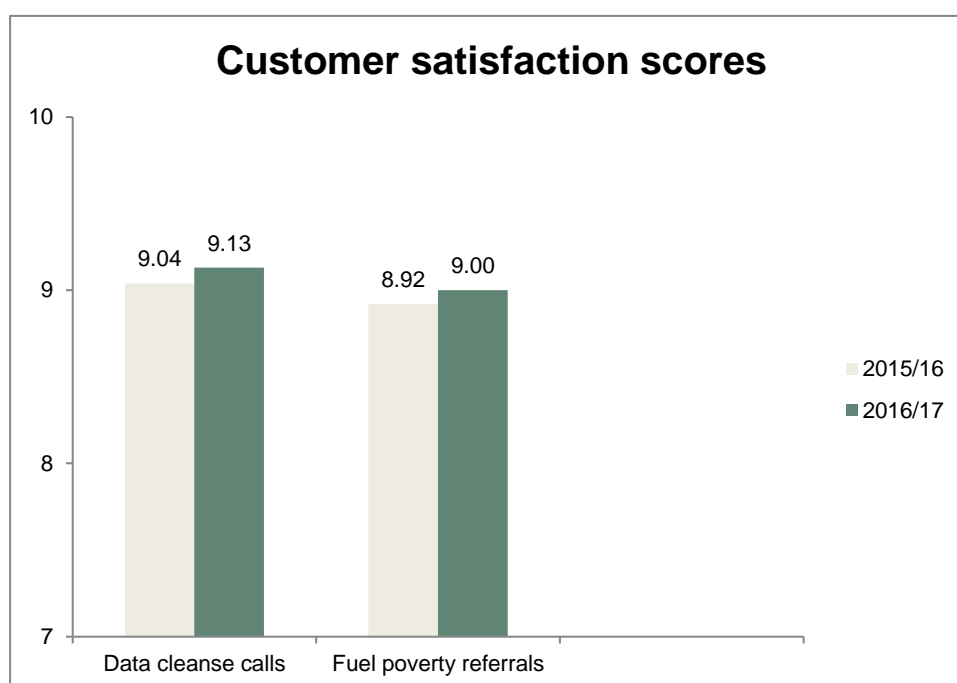
8.95 Providing these support options requires staff to be trained to prepare them for the challenges associated with severe weather. During 2016/17 the following training was delivered.

Staff training for severe weather (staff trained)					
Training type	West Midlands	East Midlands	South Wales	South West	Total WPD
All terrain vehicles – including waterlogged ground	13	6	16	5	40
Flood rescue boat operator	0	9	0	0	9
Off road driver training	11	20	8	17	56
Water first responder – operating safely in or near flood water	3	15	3	13	34
Co-worker rescue from water	10	8	0	8	26

Output (69) Ask for feedback from vulnerable customers about our service.



- 8.96** Feedback from customers is invaluable in assisting us to make sure that we are supporting customers effectively and that the service we provide is appropriate.
- 8.97** As well as the surveys undertaken as part of Ofgem's Broad Measure of Customer Satisfaction, WPD commissions additional research which tests the satisfaction levels of a broader group of customers and identifies potential improvements to our services. Research is conducted by expert external research providers to ensure that the results are objective and robust. We survey customers to measure satisfaction after actions have been taken and to identify potential improvements.
- 8.98** In 2015/16 we introduced a new survey specifically for vulnerable customers. This measures the impact of the PSR data cleanse team, and the views of customers who have been referred to a partner agency for fuel poverty advice.
- 8.99** Our results for the first two years of RIIO-ED1 are shown below.



- 8.100** The satisfaction surveys are used to ensure that we deliver the right levels of service and that customers are happy with the partners that we work with.

Output (70) Develop ways of sharing information with local resilience forums.



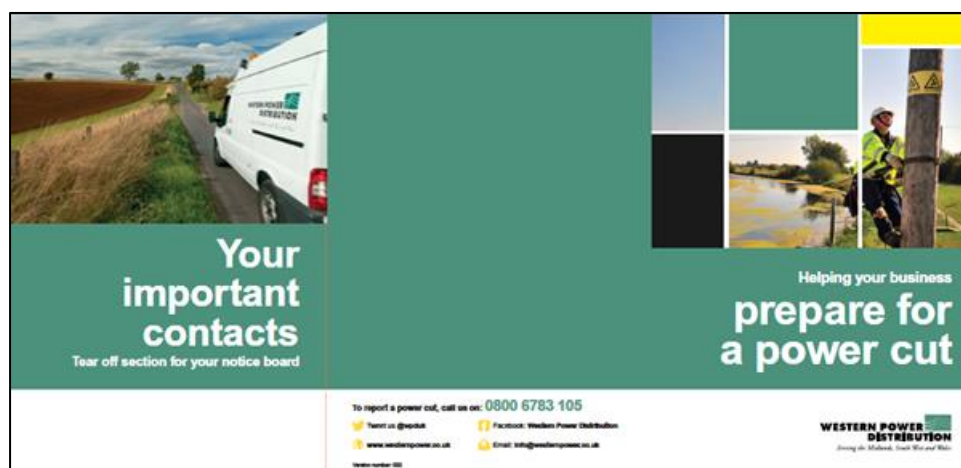
8.101 We work with Local Resilience Forums (LRF) on an ongoing basis to ensure that we are able to provide a range of services during emergencies. During 2016/17 WPD worked with 19 forums across the four licence areas, developing external partnerships as a result. Work in 2016/17 included the following.

- Establishing additional partnerships with Fire and Rescue Services in Northamptonshire and Staffordshire (we already work with services in South Wales, East Wales and Avon & Somerset) to identify and sign-up eligible PSR customers, share data and align our services.
- Launching a new £10,000 fund to support local resilience forums to devise innovative ways to engage their member networks in relation to developing resilience to power cuts. For example Leicestershire Council have produced a series of short videos for social media relaying key power cut tips for small businesses that have been shared with all their local resilience forum members.

8.102 WPD continues to be committed to taking an active part with Gold Command arrangements for emergency response during severe weather conditions, working with the emergency services. However, during 2016/17 these arrangements were not activated at any point.

8.103 We participate with training exercises to ensure that we are prepared for emergencies. For example in September 2016 we participated in a multi-agency exercise testing responses to a simulated major flood event in Leicester.

8.104 During 2016/17 we have developed a power cut advice booklet which will be issued to 50,000 small businesses through the Chambers of Commerce. 10,000 have been issued to date and this will continue in 2017/18.



Providing information during an emergency

8.105 We have developed our website to ensure that effective updates are available during emergencies for customers, the media, local authorities and other emergency resilience partners.

8.106 When a storm is forecast we increase staffing and provide more communication. In 2016/17 we introduced new storm bulletins which are emailed to customers who have registered their interest. There are three categories of bulletin – one sent in advance of a predicted event, one during a storm and one post event. The thresholds for triggering a bulletin have been agreed with the Customer Panel. We inform stakeholders of the latest weather conditions, areas affected, the number of customers off supply and key steps we are taking to restore power. The bulletins were first used for Storm Angus in January 2017 and we have had 3,559 stakeholders register their email addresses.



8.107 In the event of a storm we open up additional 'ramp-up' contact centres staffed by non-operational staff. During 2016/17 we extended the timeframes for these ramp-up centres to be open and expanded their remit to include making outbound calls. With the assistance of the ramp-up centres our main Contact Centres can prioritise outbound calls, particularly those made to vulnerable customers. During Storm Doris, in February 2017, we made 5,747 proactive calls in 24 hours whilst handling 37,447 inbound calls.

Case study – how we communicated during Storm Doris

Having received weather forecasts several days in advance we arranged for additional staff to be available in call centres and to answer social media and web chat queries.

During the storm itself, a 'Power cut alerts' banner was posted on the website home page, this appeared in red at the top of the page for both desktop and mobile devices. We provided contact information, information about the impact of the storm, and details on what we were doing to get customers back on supply. We also directed customers to the live online power cut map for details of specific incidents and to Twitter where we were posting regular newsfeeds. Further information was also available on our Facebook page.

The website received a record 126,299 web hits in a 24 hour period. As well as providing summary data through the website, the Press Office was available 24 hours a day handling all media enquiries.

8.108 During severe weather regular updates are provided to the government and industry regulator - detailing contingency planning arrangements before the event, the number of customers affected during the event, advising on risks to the electricity network and information on restoration times after the event. WPD produces an extensive closedown report for key stakeholders such as Ofgem, BEIS, local resilience forums and the media, with statistics for specific regions, actions taken and lessons learnt.

Reducing fuel poverty by supporting customers to access help

8.109 Some customers struggle to afford electricity and to effectively heat their properties. WPD has contact with over 2 million customers each year, which provides an opportunity to identify customers in fuel poverty and offer assistance. Contact Centre staff are trained to recognise the signs of fuel poverty and can arrange referrals to our partner organisations where required.

8.110 Since the publication of the RIIO-ED1 Business Plan, WPD's approach to addressing fuel poverty has developed significantly; being informed by the results of trial initiatives and the influence of stakeholder engagement.

Output (71) Build a database of regional agencies we can refer customers to for help.



8.111 WPD uses the expertise of other organisations to provide support for fuel poverty. Two different approaches are used.

- WPD referring PSR customers to our partners for fuel poverty support.
- Partners referring customers they have worked with to WPD for registration on the PSR

8.112 We have worked extensively with stakeholders to define WPD's role in tackling fuel poverty. They tell us projects must deliver a holistic service dealing with a range of issues that could be contributing to fuel poverty. To ensure comprehensive support, we have therefore defined criteria that every WPD project must be capable of delivering. These are detailed below.

- Income maximisation e.g. debt management
- Energy tariff advice e.g. switching
- Energy efficiency measures e.g. home insulation schemes
- Heating solutions e.g. boiler replacement schemes
- Behavioural changes e.g. effective use of heating systems
- Health & wellbeing e.g. mobility aids and fire safety checks

8.113 To deliver this full range of capabilities, a framework of multiple partners is established, each of which is capable of delivering support to customers over the phone and face-to-face. Working with multiple agencies has the risk of the customer having to interact with too many agencies, so we work with one lead agency (responsible for supporting the customer throughout the process and reporting on outcomes) who then manage a network of regional expert partners.

8.114 Our lead partner organisations are Citizens Advice Coventry, Citizens Advice Northamptonshire, Energy Saving Trust and Centre for Sustainable Energy.

8.115 Overall through these lead agencies and their network of supporting organisations, WPD worked with over 70 agencies in 2016/17.

8.116 During 2015/16 we expanded our initial pilot scheme to cover all four licence areas. During 2016/17 we have worked to improve and enhance the services provided, this included:

- hosting best practice events with all partners to share learning and tackle common challenges to ensure consistency;
- rolling out a consistent contact process across all partners;
- rolling out research by the Energy Saving Trust to help quantify the impact of behaviour change actions such as bleeding radiators, changing thermostat settings and washing machine temperatures; and
- ensuring that all schemes offer support with Winter Fuel Payment applications.

Output (72) Work with partners to develop links to and from our website.



8.117 Further details on our fuel poverty projects, and links to our partner organisations, can be found on WPD's website together with a contact details for our Social Obligations team.

www.westernpower.co.uk/About-us/Priority-Services/Addressing-fuel-poverty.aspx

Output (73) Develop joint information and awareness campaigns, and co-ordinate with partners to provide customers with help.



8.118 The 'Power Up' initiative is WPD's referral service where customers identified as requiring fuel affordability help are assisted by a partner organisation.





8.119 Evolving from a single pilot scheme in 2014, we established three full time partnerships in 2014/15 and, following further stakeholder engagement, a fourth partnership in February 2016. WPD now has a 'Power Up' scheme in each licence area.

8.120 Each scheme is administered by one lead agency, who then manage a network of local partners to provide comprehensive support.

8.121 Our lead agencies are Citizens Advice Coventry, Citizens Advice Northamptonshire, Energy Saving Trust and Centre for Sustainable Energy.

8.122 Performance of each scheme is reviewed monthly, which includes tracking the outcome for every referral. Quantitative savings (for the customers) are recorded only when the outcome is confirmed (e.g. following a tariff switch or benefit entitlement change), alongside qualitative outcomes (e.g. free stair lift installations or subsidised connections to the gas network).

8.123 In total, WPD's 'Power Up' schemes supported 7,205 fuel poor customers during 2016/17; these customers saved a combined £1.4m. The outcomes achieved by the individual schemes are summarised below:

Outputs:			
			
1,202 referrals	1,904 referrals	3,378 referrals	721 referrals
Saving £497k a year	Saving £226k a year	Saving £392k a year	Saving £302k a year
8.89/10 customer satisfaction	9.07/10 customer satisfaction	8.99/10 customer satisfaction	8.89/10 customer satisfaction

Output (74) Provide fuel poverty training to our staff who have contact with members of the public.



8.124 Every member of our PSR team has received bespoke training on fuel poverty through expert agencies such as the Energy Savings Trust and Citizens Advice. Contact Centre staff receive regular updates.

Output (75) Use data analysis to help identify areas with a high concentration of vulnerable households.



8.125 In 2013, we worked with the Centre for Sustainable Energy to develop social indicator maps that identified geographic areas with high concentrations of vulnerable people. The data enabled us to target partnership projects to those areas with the greatest need.

8.126 In 2017 we took account of changes to definitions of vulnerability and fuel poverty and refreshed social indicator mapping. We combined WPD network and PSR data with 41 other sources including government statistics on benefit claims and long term disability, more granular health data and a more extensive range of socio-demographic datasets.

8.127 Four summary multiple indicator maps were produced showing the following.

- Priority Service Register eligibility
- Fuel poverty
- Network vulnerability
- Low community resilience

8.128 This data enables us to target our projects to areas of greatest need whilst allowing us to work with the most appropriate agencies. For example the data has enabled us to identify partnership organisations in areas with high PSR eligibility but low levels of PSR registration.

8.129 We have invited relevant partner agencies to use this data to propose joint project opportunities focused on tackling the areas of need demonstrated by the data. This information has been made available on our website and can be found at the following link.

www.westernpower.co.uk/About-us/Priority-Services/Social-indicator-mapping

Output (76) Develop local outreach services.



- 8.130** To ensure that we capture the widest possible scope of vulnerable customers we also support fuel poverty outreach schemes. Whilst our 'Power Up' schemes provide support for customers already on the PSR, we identified that we needed to develop more innovative approaches to reach customers vulnerable to fuel poverty who are not known to us.
- 8.131** The 'Affordable Warmth' project was initiated in November 2014 to provide funding for fuel poverty advice to be given via existing community support schemes already working in deprived areas.
- 8.132** As with 'Power Up' we work with one lead agency who then co-ordinates with a number of smaller agencies. During 2015/16 we established schemes in all four licence areas.
- 8.133** In addition to providing fuel poverty support, partners are funded to provide power cut resilience advice and to promote WPD's PSR; as well as gaining informed consent to sign up eligible customers to WPD's PSR directly.
- 8.134** During 2016/17, 3,528 customers were supported to save £1m a year through 'Affordable Warmth'; 1,863 of these individuals were added to the PSR.
- 8.135** To identify organisations that can help to tackle fuel poverty in new and innovative ways we have also created a £90k 'Local Action Fund' where schemes bid for funding. With the assistance of the Centre for Sustainable Energy we established detailed scoring criteria.

Five pilot schemes have been established as a result.

'Local Action Fund' – pilot projects			
Organisation and project detail	Funding provided	Numbers supported	Customer savings
Northampton Citizens Advice – work with Macmillan Cancer and Anglian Water to identify customers with ill health and in fuel poverty.	£25k	248	£400,311
Cornwall Rural Community – work with carers to support rurally isolated elderly people on the Isles of Scilly where 20.4% are fuel poor. Deliver benefit health checks, fuel debt reduction and energy efficiency measures.	£25k	78	£45,823
Derbyshire Council Healthy Homes – target very low income residents in private housing, suffering from long term illnesses worsened by the cold. Work closely with GP practices and housing and social care services.	£15k	140	£175,800
Birmingham Disability Resource Centre – support disabled people and those with long-term illnesses via workshops to reduce bills, improve energy efficiency, register on the PSR, undertake health and wellbeing activities and receive employment and finance advice.	£15k	508	£74,930
Wellington Homes – create a model for GP practices to provide preventative healthcare support for patients suffering from the health impacts of cold homes via local cross sector partnership working (WPD, Centre for Sustainable Energy, Wessex Water and Taunton Borough Council). Use combined data analysis: e.g. energy property ratings, WPD's PSR and GP health referrals to proactively contact patients and deliver home visits via Health Outreach Workers.	£10k	93	£19,664