



Power for life 2017

Our handy guide for electricity customers



Who we are

Western Power Distribution is the electricity distribution network operator for the Midlands, South West England and South Wales, serving 7.8 million customers.

We are regulated by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) which establishes how much money distribution companies like ours are entitled to, and what we have to deliver for that money. Currently, around 16% of a typical household bill – approximately £100 a year – comes to us to distribute power.

In this publication we outline some of our business responsibilities, highlight our performance and provide our contact information to enable you to get in touch with us if you are ever affected by a power cut. We also explain our free priority service for customers who may need extra support.

How our role is evolving

As an electricity distribution business WPD doesn't sell electricity – that's the job of supply companies. Our role is to ensure the power network of poles and pylons, cables, wires and substations delivers electricity to homes and businesses around the clock.

But there are new challenges on the horizon. The Government has set objectives for decarbonising energy, which is expected to lead to more solar panels being installed, electric vehicles replacing petrol and diesel engines, and increased use of electricity storage. The scale of the change is as yet uncertain, but we do know that it will place greater demand on the electricity network which we will need to carefully manage while continuing to serve our customers.

The speed of change is so fast that it's not inconceivable that the technologies we must prepare for haven't yet arrived on the market, let alone achieved the mass market acceptance that enables network operators like ourselves to understand the impact they will have on our systems.

What is clear is that the traditional network design of transferring electricity from large central power stations to homes and businesses using transmission and distribution networks will need to evolve into something flexible enough to cope with unknown future demands.

You can find out how we are planning for and managing this evolution in our industry on our website at www.westernpower.co.uk/DSO-Transition-Strategy

Robert Symons, Chief Executive,
Western Power Distribution.

Meeting the smart meter challenge

The UK Government wants energy suppliers to install smart meters in every home in the UK by 2020. They have a number of benefits over conventional meters because they'll give customers more control over energy use, help them to understand bills, and show what energy use is costing.



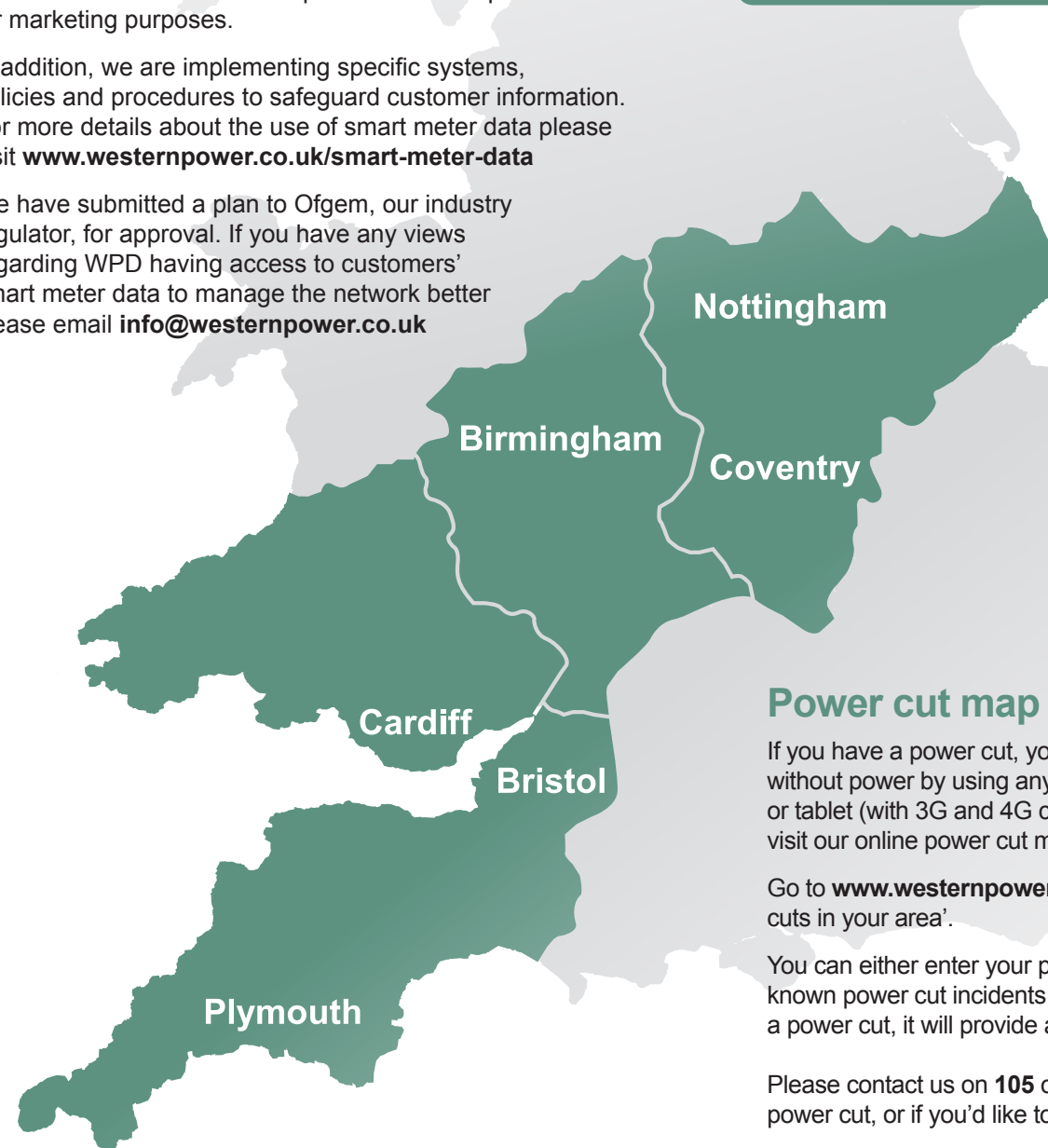
So what does this mean for WPD?

While we will not be installing or owning the meters, we will be able to use information about how much electricity is being consumed across our network to better identify the parts of the network that need to be upgraded or replaced. We could also use it to combine customer information to build up a picture of energy consumption across a particular area.

As a power distributor, we will use smart meter data to improve our electricity distribution network and to make it even more safe and efficient. It will not be used to contact customers with adverts, offers or promotions, nor will information be sold or provided to third parties for marketing purposes.

In addition, we are implementing specific systems, policies and procedures to safeguard customer information. For more details about the use of smart meter data please visit www.westernpower.co.uk/smart-meter-data

We have submitted a plan to Ofgem, our industry regulator, for approval. If you have any views regarding WPD having access to customers' smart meter data to manage the network better please email info@westernpower.co.uk



What to do if you have a power cut

Power cuts do happen from time to time, and are often due to circumstances beyond our control, but there are a number of ways you can prepare:

- 1 Check you have an old style phone available that plugs straight into the wall. It will work in a power cut – digital or cordless ones may not.
- 2 Keep a battery/solar charger handy so that you can recharge your smart phone (with 3G and 4G connectivity or devices with SIM cards) and follow updates on social media and our online power cut map.
- 3 Keep our telephone number handy or save it into your mobile phone (105 or 0800 6783 105) so that you can report a power cut or call for information and advice.
- 4 Have a torch ready (it's best not to use candles or paraffin lights).
- 5 Protect sensitive electrical equipment such as computers with a surge protector plug.
- 6 Keep a wind-up/battery/solar radio ready so you can listen to local radio updates.
- 7 If you have a mains operated stair lift, check to see if there is a manual release handle that can be used to return it safely to the ground level if it stops working.

**POWER CUT?
CALL 105**

Working hard for you

We have over 6,500 highly-trained staff who are committed to working efficiently to manage and maintain our network, and to restore power supplies quickly and safely when they are disrupted. Here's a brief glimpse of how we have performed in the last year.

£965m – the amount spent to look after our network

2GW – the extra network capacity made available to generators via innovative flexible connections

89% – power interruptions on our high voltage network restored within one hour

Over **1,800** – the number of network automation schemes completed

Over **1 million** – customer calls answered (99% within 20 seconds)

142 – the number of new engineering trainees recruited

Over **50,000** – the number of schoolchildren taught about electricity safety

Over **658,000** – text messages sent to customers

236,000 – customers added to our Priority Service Register the 1.2 million already

Power cut map

If you have a power cut, you can check if we are aware that you are without power by using any battery operated computer, smart phone or tablet (with 3G and 4G connectivity or devices with SIM cards) to visit our online power cut map.

Go to www.westernpower.co.uk and click 'Power cuts' and 'Power cuts in your area'.

You can either enter your post code or click to view a map showing known power cut incidents in the region. If we are already aware of a power cut, it will provide an estimated time of restoration.

Please contact us on **105** or **0800 6783 105** if we're not aware of a power cut, or if you'd like to log a call or report any network damage.

Our priority service



If you rely on electricity for medical equipment or are elderly, very ill or disabled, you may need extra support during a power cut. To join our confidential, free Priority Service Register (PSR) simply call **0800 096 3080** or visit **www.westernpower.co.uk/PSR**

Who is eligible?

- Customers with medical dependencies on electricity - like kidney dialysis, ventilator or oxygen concentrator users;
- The elderly, disabled or chronically sick;
- Customers who depend upon electrical equipment like stair lifts or bath hoists;
- If you have a communication need because you are blind, deaf, partially sighted, hearing impaired or you are unable to communicate in English;
- Or if you have temporary vulnerabilities like recent hospital leavers or households with new-born babies.

What can we provide?

- A dedicated PSR telephone number enabling you to get straight through to us during a power cut;
- Support, including warm meals and drinks during prolonged power cuts;
- A password scheme to help you feel secure. You can check that visitors to your property are legitimate WPD employees;
- Personal contact ahead of any planned power cuts;
- Contact every two years to check your details and give you power cut advice;
- We will endeavour to call medically dependent customers within three hours of an unplanned power cut;
- We will seek to call all PSR customers affected during prolonged power cuts and major incidents.

Getting in touch

If you need to speak with us in an emergency, perhaps because you are experiencing a loss of power supply, you can contact us on the new three digit number 105. You can also use our existing 0800 number below.

Phone: 105 or 0800 6783 105.

Text Relay and NGT Lite: (if you are deaf or hard of hearing) for text relay dial 18001 first using your textphone. For NGT Lite dial 18001 02920 535 636.

Webchat: www.westernpower.co.uk

We value your opinion

We believe regular communication with stakeholders is vital, which is why we encourage our customers to have their say on our plans for the future.

If you would like to register an interest in taking part in our stakeholder consultations or if you have any questions regarding the work we do, please get in touch:

Tel: 0800 121 4909

Email: info@westernpower.co.uk

Post: c/o Corporate Communications, Avonbank, Feeder Road, Bristol BS2 0TB.

You'll also find more information on our website at **www.westernpower.co.uk** under 'About Us' and 'Stakeholder Information'.



Performance standards

When we provide certain services we have Guaranteed Standards of Performance that we must meet. If we fail to achieve them we will make a payment. To find out more or to view the full list please visit **www.westernpower.co.uk/guaranteed-standards**

Help us to help you

And you could win shopping vouchers PLUS £500 for your chosen charity

We're committed to providing the best service to you. If you provide us with your contact details, should you ever have to call us about a power cut, we can quickly pinpoint you on our network and give you the most up-to-date information.

Please visit **www.westernpower.co.uk** and complete our form. If you do so before Friday November 10, 2017, you will be entered into our prize draw for a chance to win £500 worth of shopping vouchers plus £500 for your chosen charity.

Please note: Your information will not be passed on to any third parties and we will not call to sell you anything.



Twitter: @wpduk  **Facebook:** Western Power Distribution 

Download our new **Power Cut Reporter App** from the App Store or Google Play to a mobile phone or another device that has cellular data.

General enquiries please dial 0800 096 3080.