

Annex 8: Electricity users in vulnerable circumstances

December 2021

Annex 08

electricity users in vulnerable circumstances strategy



How Electricity North West as a distributor of electricity to the North West will engage and support people allowing them to access information and services to meet needs

About Electricity North West

Electricity North West Limited is one of 14 electricity distribution network operators (DNOs) in Great Britain. We are responsible for maintaining and upgrading 56,000km of network and nearly 500 major substations across the region. We supply the electricity to the diverse communities in the North West of England which extends from Macclesfield all the way up to Carlisle.

We are regulated by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) who provide DNOs with the license to operate and decide what's fair for us to charge our customers for each price control period.

Our current price control began in 2015 and runs to 2023. It's referred to as RII0-ED1. In full, that stands for Revenue = Incentives + Innovation + Outputs, Electricity Distribution 1. Under this framework, the price we can charge our customers is fixed until the next price control, RII0-ED2, which will run from 2023 until 2028.

The period of time which the RII0-2 price control covers will see significant change in the way electricity is generated, consumed and stored, driving innovation across the whole energy system both now and into the future.



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1 Welcome

Welcome to our electricity users in vulnerable circumstances strategy which sets out the challenges that electricity users can face, our approach to supporting the North West region to address these challenges, and the principles and themes that guide our thinking and the development of our services and commitment.

Continually developing the services that support the 5.4 million electricity users across the North West and ensuring that they are included within the journey through the energy transition to a zero-carbon future is an essential part of our commitment. As part of this strategy it is vital that we remove barriers preventing customers from accessing the services and support available, not just from us, but also the wider support network already in place for the region.

The rapid move towards Net Zero highlights individuals' increasing reliance on electricity. Changes may impact daily electricity usage and therefore drive a need to recognise and intervene with those users in need of support. This support must inform and protect them so that they know how to be ready for the changes, so as not to leave them behind.

Our strategy outlines our approach to engagement with stakeholders in helping us with ideas and the delivery of our plans. A consultation has been completed and all feedback has been incorporated into the final strategy to align our focus with the needs of the region we serve.

The proposals within the strategy target many areas that impact the region, working with our stakeholders and customers it is apparent that whole system thinking includes all parties actively tackling the challenges that face our communities today. Providing a service to the North West provides us with an opportunity to be part of the solution and maximise every contact we have to deliver benefit improving the relationship and trust within the industry. Trust within communities is paramount to reach the UK and North West targets for Net Zero.



Stephanie Trubshaw
Customer Director

What is 'vulnerability' for Electricity North West?

Within our organisation we have key drivers that shape our thinking including customers on our Priority Services Register (PSR); those who tell us they need a lot more support; circumstances that can make anyone vulnerable such as fuel poverty, bad weather, loss of electricity and community needs affected by wider social impacts – such as those we have seen through 2020 highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vulnerability can be both temporary and permanent due to an individual's circumstances; the changing world of the electricity network; or economic and social developments of climate and education.

The disruption caused by loss of electricity can create concern or distress for anyone, but for someone who is already vulnerable due to other circumstances in their lives it can be overwhelming. We want to provide the right support to minimise these situations and build resilience in our communities in the short and long term.

Our network provides electricity to 5.4 million users across the North West and it needs to be accessible, reliable and developed with the future in mind. Currently 12.1% (250,000) of the homes in the North West are classified as fuel poor, which means that these households have a higher proportion of fuel costs to keep their homes warm and powered resulting in choices to be made impacting standards of living.

Many of the wider factors that create vulnerability are addressed by a range of organisations, and we believe that we have a role to play in ensuring different organisations and sectors work together to simplify the access to support that will benefit end users and minimise the impact on their daily lives.

As a distribution network operator the development of our services and provision of electricity need to be sustainable for everyone and not leave people behind through lack of knowledge, lack of tailored support, lack of engagement or assumed knowledge.

A stakeholder-led approach

An important driver for us is to understand and respond to the needs of our customers and wider stakeholders. Working together is the core to our company purpose – engaging with our stakeholders and electricity users on vulnerability, research, collaboration, sharing best practice and insights to continually develop our understanding and proposition is the foundation to our success.

We have developed this strategy with stakeholders through robust and detailed ongoing engagement, working alongside our Strategic Consumer Vulnerability Panel to understand customers' needs and future plans to support the North West. There were five clear priorities that emerged that were common to the region, Electricity North West and Ofgem that we are proposing for RIIO-ED2.

We have tested these priorities with wider groups including external stakeholders through a consultation process.

We trust our strategy will help you understand our plans for the future to support electricity users in vulnerable circumstances.

2 Executive summary

We operate the network which provides electricity to 2.4 million properties across the North West region, achieving a 99.995% reliability performance. The network is continually affected by weather, aging components and changing customer requirements necessitating a continual need for maintenance, development and improvement.

Within the footprint of Electricity North West there are currently 12.1% (250,000) households that are classified as living in fuel poverty and currently there over 1.7 million people who could be accessing support services available through our Priority Services Register (PSR). 49.5% of this population are registered, leaving a shortfall of over 50% of electricity users who are not receiving the benefits of these services or support on offer.

This strategy outlines the improvements we will deliver in RII0-ED2 for electricity users in vulnerable circumstances. Incorporated within it are the key challenges being faced and the measures of success proposed to be monitored through the period.

The strategy is built on a foundation of principles and four pillars which provide direction and clarity on the areas we will continue to develop for success. The principles were co-created with stakeholders from our Consumer Vulnerable Advisory Panel and will be embedded throughout our organisation. The pillars contain detailed action plans for continual improvement and will be reviewed regularly internally and externally to meet the needs of our customers.

The Priority Services Register is a database shared by all energy suppliers and distribution networks. The register has 29 different codes to capture a situation or health condition that could leave someone in a vulnerable circumstance should their electricity supply fail.

We're committed to simplifying the registration process for everyone, increasing accessibility and minimising the effort required by the electricity user. We can achieve this by increasing our network of trusted partners who can share the data to provide additional services to those on the register.

The adverse consequences of a power cut can be considerably greater for people in vulnerable circumstances. One of the most impactful things we can do, which is also strongly supported by our customers and stakeholders, is to improve the reliability of the local network for those in vulnerable circumstances. Therefore as can be seen in our Network Improvements for customers in vulnerable circumstances within our reliability section, we are targeting to improve the network performance to remove or reduce the likelihood of a loss of electricity to 17,000 customer who are registered as high risk through the Priority Services needs codes.

We have a clear role to continually develop and refresh our network of partners, increase our understanding of vulnerabilities in our region and, where possible, minimise the risk of creating barriers to services such as the move towards Net Zero.

The risk of communities being left behind is a significant concern for us as the whole energy system changes and we're preparing to support future technologies. People will become even more reliant on electricity for their everyday lives and it will be incredibly challenging ensuring we meet their needs.

Albeit some of the proposals within the strategy may appear to be outside the remit of an electricity distribution network, working with our stakeholders and customers it is apparent that whole system thinking includes all parties actively tackling the challenges that face our communities today. Supplying a basic need of electricity to the North West provides us with an opportunity to be part of the solution and maximise every contact we have to benefit the electricity user and improve the relationship and trust within the industry. Trust within communities is paramount to reach the UK and North West targets for Net Zero and bring customers on the journey with confidence.

The proposals in the ED2 strategy to increase our partnerships and fund research both allow us to ensure we develop our services to reduce the disruption to customers when they experience a power cut and increase accessibility to all the services including PSR registration tailored to the customer needs.

This strategy outlines some of the ways we will do this such as working with partners to help electricity users create the capacity they need, delivering engagement opportunities to be ready for the future, keeping bills low and ensuring users are not left behind.



2 Executive summary

This table represents a summary of the activities we plan to undertake in ED2 (2023-2028) and associated targets, which have been developed from our stakeholder engagement. Further details can be found throughout the strategy.

Activity	Minimum performance
Improving reliability for those in vulnerable circumstances	Reduce the impact or likelihood of a loss of supply for over 17,000 customers with known high vulnerabilities (for more detail see business plan section 5.2.1.5)
Supporting those in fuel poverty to access the support they need to improve their situation	25,000 electricity users per annum access support £7 million customer direct benefit
	25,000 electricity users per annum aware of support
	Smart Street delivered to a further 250,000 homes
	Implementing developments from industry and sector trials to create new minimum service expectations. With outcomes to increase % uptake of referrals to all available services through the partnerships
Maximising the one contact customer benefit of investment – excluding the fuel poverty support	Increase the Social Return on Investment (SROI) of benefit delivered across the partnership network to an average benefit of £125 per customer supported
One contact support service	A single portal for registering and accessing Priority Services data for all third sector and utilities for the North West region
Open data	Create community led information that represents the needs and demographics of the population available through open sources
Electricity North West (ENWL) colleagues trained in recognising and supporting vulnerable circumstances	100% of colleagues trained through a tiered level approach of education and awareness aligned to their roles and responsibilities to recognise and reduce the effects of vulnerabilities
	100% of colleagues trained with all new and emerging mental wellbeing linking the impacts of changing circumstances e.g. the impact on an individual situation with a sudden loss of power
Learn and develop through customer quantitative and qualitative feedback loops	Introduction of a £250k annual fund to drive engagement and learning by third sectors and ENWL
	New customer engaged panels to shape the future
	Educating current and future electricity users to be ready for the energy transition
Provide a wide range of services to support the customers on the Priority Services Register	60% of 1.1 million eligible homes
	600,000 direct ENWL contacts with PSR registered customers explaining the services we provide regarding a loss of supply
	75,000 electricity users accessing referral networks
Improving the service to our customers	Contacting every registered customer on a two-year cycle
	30% customer details updated or confirmed as correct
	Customer satisfaction 91% for the benefits of being on the register with or without a power cut
	Increase the number of first call answer from 86% through increased resource and train all the contact centre to the higher standard of welfare support
Continually develop a service to recognise and meet the need of the North West community	Customer focus groups for Priority Service Registered customers and targeted growth of partnerships
	Increasing the current partnership network for data sharing to provide wider range of services across the North West

2 Executive summary

Delivering these activities and measures will result in the following outcomes:

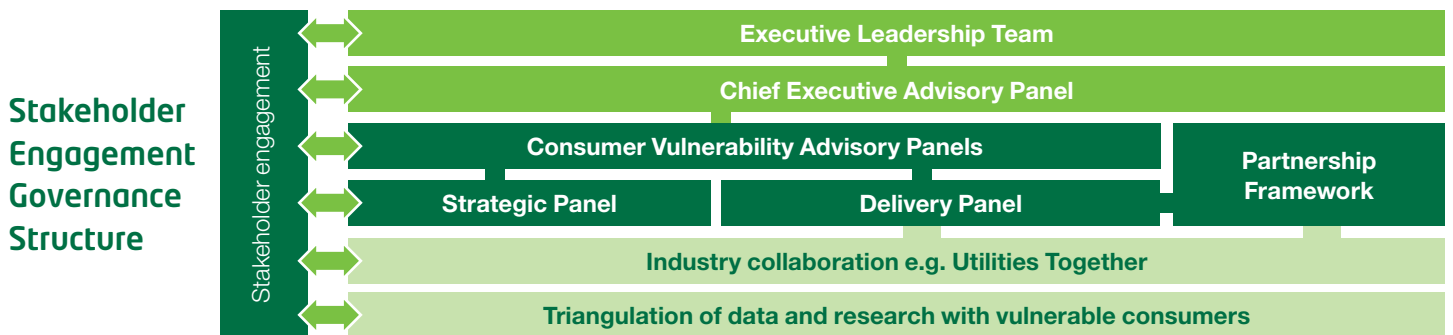
- Reduction in the disruption to vulnerable customers created by power cuts
- Removal of barriers increasing the participation in the Net Zero targets and uptake of new technology
- Continual development of the services provided to improve customer experience in a power cut
- ENWL being a trusted brand of the North West increasing the participation in energy efficiency and decarbonisation, reducing demand on the electricity network
- Communities engaged through tailored inclusive communications
- Increased accessibility of ENWL support and registration of the Priority Services
- Increase the uptake of the trusted services provided to the Priority Services members
- Customers able to access information to allow them to make the choices that suit their lives
- Reduced customer touch points enabling simpler access to support and information



To support electricity users in vulnerable circumstances during RIIO-ED2, we will be building on the enhanced service we currently provide to consumers in vulnerable circumstances, before, during and after a power cut that has been continually developed for many years now. Alongside this work we have made great strides in expanding support to consumers who are in, or at risk of fuel poverty, to ensure that they can benefit from the energy transition. We will leverage this learning, experience and current partners expertise to scale-up the broad range of services that have successfully delivered for our customers in the years to come.

We've deliberately created a culture of partnership that's brought our region together

Our Executive Leadership Team have made it a priority to champion our consumer vulnerability strategy through their ongoing involvement in engagement and collaboration. Our stakeholder engagement structure is mature and includes a wide range of embedded feedback loops.



This structure supports our agility and responsiveness to any changes in our operating environment, such as during COVID-19. The pandemic effectively held up a mirror to our engagement strategy – and showed what can be achieved when we have strong relationships with our stakeholders. Our collaborative approach has increased data sharing and pooling of resources in targeted areas to reduce organisational silos, create synergies, share best practice and maximise impact.

KEY ACHIEVEMENT 1: Using data to understand vulnerability challenges

Performance highlights

91.5%
PSR customer satisfaction
☆☆☆☆

28
new data sets to enrich our social data mapping tool

PSR gap reduced by **34%** since 2015
▽

With the support of our stakeholders we classified the severity of 29 Ofgem vulnerability needs codes as low, medium or high based on the impact of a loss of electricity on a consumer living in vulnerable circumstances. By using data to understand the drivers and types of vulnerability in our region, developing tailored services to support customers and prioritising those who are most in need, we have been working to close the PSR registration gap. The 'PSR gap' is the difference between the volume of customers eligible to be registered on the PSR and those registered.

At the start of 2020/21 an updated mapping showed that over 31% of the population in the North West – 1.7 million people – are eligible for the Priority Services Register (PSR).

Due to the data sources available Electricity North West and other DNO's measure data by the number of properties registered within the region. There are 2.4 million properties within the North West, within this there are 2.2 million homes and 200,000 businesses.

3 ED1 Journey so far

As part of the support for our business customers in 2020 a Business Priority Service Register (BPSR) following research and feedback of the impact on this customer segment was introduced. Providing business customers to register for an increased level of communication including a 30 day notification of any planned interruptions, an opportunity to register or guidance around generator provision for their business continuity planning.

28% of the UK population live alone, this creates a greater risk if you require any extra support and can create vulnerabilities. All other homes have on average of 2.4 people living in them. A minimum of 39% of the properties within the North West are eligible to be registered on the PSR based on multiple factors including risk of single living, age profiles and registered disabilities. However we are very aware that this is too low due to unrecorded vulnerabilities on national data.

Current data sources prevent accurate identification of every needs code because there are some such as 'unable to answer door', 'restricted hand movement' and the transient codes that are difficult to reliably identify a meaningful data source for the national average. There are also some codes such as 'mental health' that are very broad and varying levels support and identification, that is optional to the individual to share or not.

Together the DNO community are agreeing a clear set of rules and data sources to be used to create a standard reporting and measuring tool within this area to allow direct comparison of the eligible customers to be applied through ED2.

Based on the information sources available, there are likely to be over 1.1m properties eligible for registration for the PSR, which is more than double the current number on the register. This number is the basis of our targets through ED2.

Measure	RIIO-ED1 (Actual)			RIIO-ED2 (Minimum)			RIIO-ED2 (Stretch)		
	Volume	%	PSR gap	Volume	%	PSR gap	Volume	%	PSR gap
Proportion of Properties eligible who are registered	577,000	49.5%	50.5%	660,000	60%	40%	880,000	80%	20%

We have signed-up 903,618 PSR customers		
High category	Medium category	Low category
250,294 members (27% share)	304,539 members (34% share)	348,740 members (39% share)
Top sub-category: chronic/serious illness (10%)	Top sub-category: physical impairment (11%)	Top sub-category: pensionable age (33%)

Our high priority groups are those living with a condition which typically has an electrical dependency and ensures that these customers receive our attention first, ahead of those living with other conditions. It is important to stress that we endeavour to give the same level of support to all PSR customers but due to some faults impacting large volumes of PSR customers, and the speed and nature of the fault restoration, it is sometimes necessary to give preference to the highest priority customers before any others to ensure they are safe.

Customers with more than one needs code are graded based on the highest categorisation. In 2020/21 we introduced a process that enables our colleagues to change the category allocated to customers if they identify intersecting criteria, this approach was developed with our advisory panel. For example, if one of our advisors discovers that a dementia patient, someone of pensionable age, oxygen-dependent patients, or someone with more severe mental health challenges is living alone, their categorisation is revised upwards. We have also enhanced our social data mapping tool with a category of 'living alone' to enable us to target customers to raise awareness of the PSR and increase registration accordingly.



KEY ACHIEVEMENT 2: Continuously improving and refreshing our data

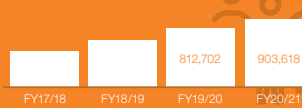
Performance highlights

Industry first

trial of a multi-utility single PSR



0.9m PSR members (55% of those eligible)



Utilities Together



We have a Business Plan commitment to keep an up-to-date and accurate PSR. A range of innovative and targeted initiatives enabled us to grow our PSR membership to a total of 903,573 members, whilst simultaneously maintaining the quality of the existing data.

In our annual cycle of market research PSR members asked us to maintain regular contact with them to understand changes in their critical needs and raise awareness of our services. In response we enhanced the PSR data we hold through a three-pronged strategy:

- Enabling a one stop shop for prospective members: We have used our embedded ‘behind the scenes’ processes that ensure customers only have to register once through ongoing data sharing channels with United Utilities and Cadent.
- Making every contact with our customers count: Our ‘We’re Switched On’ approach means that as part of every call we tell customers about the PSR and ask whether anyone in their household, or anyone they know, would benefit from this service. Our partners have complemented this activity by issuing leaflets and registering customers on our behalf.
- Proactively contacting PSR members: As part of our tailored service we proactively contact members through their preferred channel. The purpose of this contact is so that we can check the information we hold is still relevant and appropriate. We remove dormant records when we have had no contact from the customer, and have made 3 consecutive contacts but not received any response over a 3 year period. We also cleanse our data when consumers signal to us that their circumstances have changed. We provide a range of mechanisms for members to leave or register on the PSR including by letter, an online form, chatbot, telephone and in response to receiving proactive weather alerts.

In 2019/20 Ofgem’s Independent Panel said that, ‘with regards to PSR related work, ENWL demonstrated good, proactive management of its PSR. The Panel also noted the good, continued work with suppliers and other utilities to ensure vulnerable customers only have to register once.’

In recent years our stakeholders have told us that the need for a multi-utility single PSR is both important and urgent and our customers have urged us to be trailblazers in leading this change.

Following the success of our industry leading PSR data-sharing trial in 2017 with United Utilities, Ofgem and Ofwat encouraged an industry roll-out of our best practice ‘one stop shop’ approach which means that consumers only need to register once.

Along with Western Power Distribution we are currently the only network to collect PSR data at an ‘individual’ and ‘property’ level. This enables us to more effectively protect an individual’s sensitive data, provide tailored support and capture transitory vulnerability.





In partnership with Citizens Advice Manchester we are now leading a trial of the Auriga nationwide portal enabling a single PSR for all vulnerable consumers. Through engaging the ‘Utilities Together’ forum we have expanded the ground-breaking trial to our regional counterparts in water and gas.

Whilst indicators of areas with high vulnerability are a key focus area, we also overlay our network faults operational data to better understand how power cuts are affecting an area in conjunction with social vulnerability. This allows us to take a comprehensive view in concluding the level of disruption from a power cut on localities with a high prevalence of vulnerability and target our PSR recruitment campaigns (lower reliability areas with high vulnerability =top, areas with high reliability with vulnerability=low).

Over the years we continue to successfully develop a wide range of communication channels to facilitate broad ranging PSR recruitment campaigns that achieve optimal reach across the north west population. This has been complemented with targeted campaigns that are prioritised on a risk basis with higher risk categories of customers reached first. Our outreach strategy has led to the PSR being promoted through housing associations, Job Centre Plus, doctors’ surgeries, pharmacies, charity shops, council tax bills, food bank parcels, nurseries, day care centres, schools, youth groups, cafes, local community events and local radio stations. This has ensured that our campaigns are inclusive of hard-to-reach communities.

During RIIO-ED1 our Consumer Vulnerability Panel challenged us to make greater use of data to predict future trends in vulnerability. Now, as a matter of course, we think about two, three and five years ahead – by finding new data source with our partners, to understand if future vulnerability challenges disrupt or confirm our existing strategy.

3 ED1 Journey so far

Enriching our social data mapping with future trends			
Physical health 	Mental health 	Economic stability 	Accessing services 
	Data shared by Cadent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide in males under 50 • Divorce rates 	Data from COVID-19 study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit claimants • Unemployment • Small business closures • Number of food banks Data shared by British Red Cross: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Vulnerability Index 	Data shared by Talk Talk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet engagement types Office for National Statistics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-English speakers Ofcom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology Tracker
Data shared by NSPCC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic abuse • Child abuse 			

The table above shows some of the work we have developed in the past 18 months.

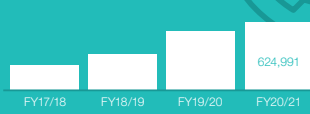
KEY ACHIEVEMENT 3: Improving our Customer Service

Performance highlights

92%
PSR customer satisfaction



76% of members proactively contacted

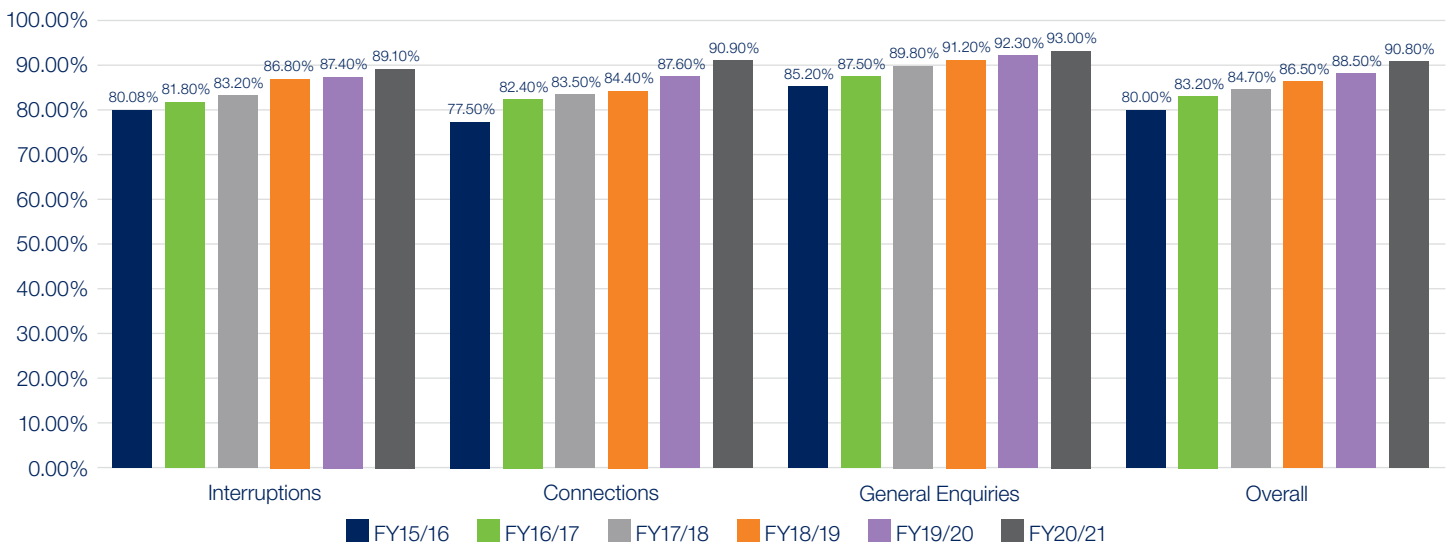


10.8%
improvement in Customer Satisfaction



One of our key priorities through ED1 has been to continually improve the experience for electricity users when they experience a loss of supply. Since the commencement of ED1 the customer satisfaction rating has improved from 80% to 90.8%. The developments have been achieved through customer insight research leading to the development or improvement of business processes to enhance the services and communication electricity users receive. In 2021 we received a national award from the Institute of Customer Service for 'Best Use of Customer Insight' which reflects on the work we have done to continually improve our services from customer feedback.

Customer Satisfaction Year on Year Performance



3 ED1 Journey so far

To continue the improvement, we introduced a customer voice panel, where customers help us shape how we communicate and what steps we take within process to provide the right support. The panel has over 1400 customers participating each year in multiple survey's providing feedback, suggestions and voting for outcomes. During 2020 the work with the customer voice panel led to the implementation of a Chatbot to support people with no supply queries as an additional channel to our existing communication routes.

Our PSR categorisation allows us to tailor the customer journey, communication and support based on need and impact when a customer experiences a loss of supply.

Tailored service provided to vulnerable consumers – exceeding Ofgem's requirements	High Category	Medium Category	Low Category
Reach of proactive contact to refresh PSR data	100% annually	Bi annually	Bi annually
Written 10 day advance notice of planned works	✓	✓	✓
Proactive calls 6 days and 1 day ahead of planned works	Called	SMS / called	SMS / called
Reminder SMS 1 day ahead of planned works	✓	✓	✓
Proactive updates during an unplanned power cut*	Called	SMS / called	SMS / called
Proactive adverse weather alerts	✓	✓	✓
Emergency top up pre-payment vouchers	✓	✓	✓
Provision on generation during planned works / unplanned	✓		
Food provision – catering vans / on the go contracts / food vouchers	✓	✓	✓
Automatic phone routing direct to our welfare team	✓	✓	✓

Our impact measurement is routinely segmented by different types of consumers in vulnerable circumstances to identify areas of improvement and gaps in our understanding. For example, we analyse the Broad Measure of Customer Satisfaction at a more granular level to understand satisfaction levels by needs codes.

In 2018 we identified gaps between our service provision and specific needs of consumers with medicine refrigeration, hearing impairment, the partially sighted and families with young children. To mitigate gaps in our understanding about why satisfaction levels were comparatively lower and identify any unmet needs we commissioned independent research with customer and stakeholder representatives. Our engagement revealed, for instance, that consumers are often unsure of the correct temperature to store their medicine at, or indeed how long it would maintain efficacy if refrigeration was lost. This uncertainty means some customers are wasting effort by leaving their home to seek alternative refrigeration or worse still, throwing their medicine away.

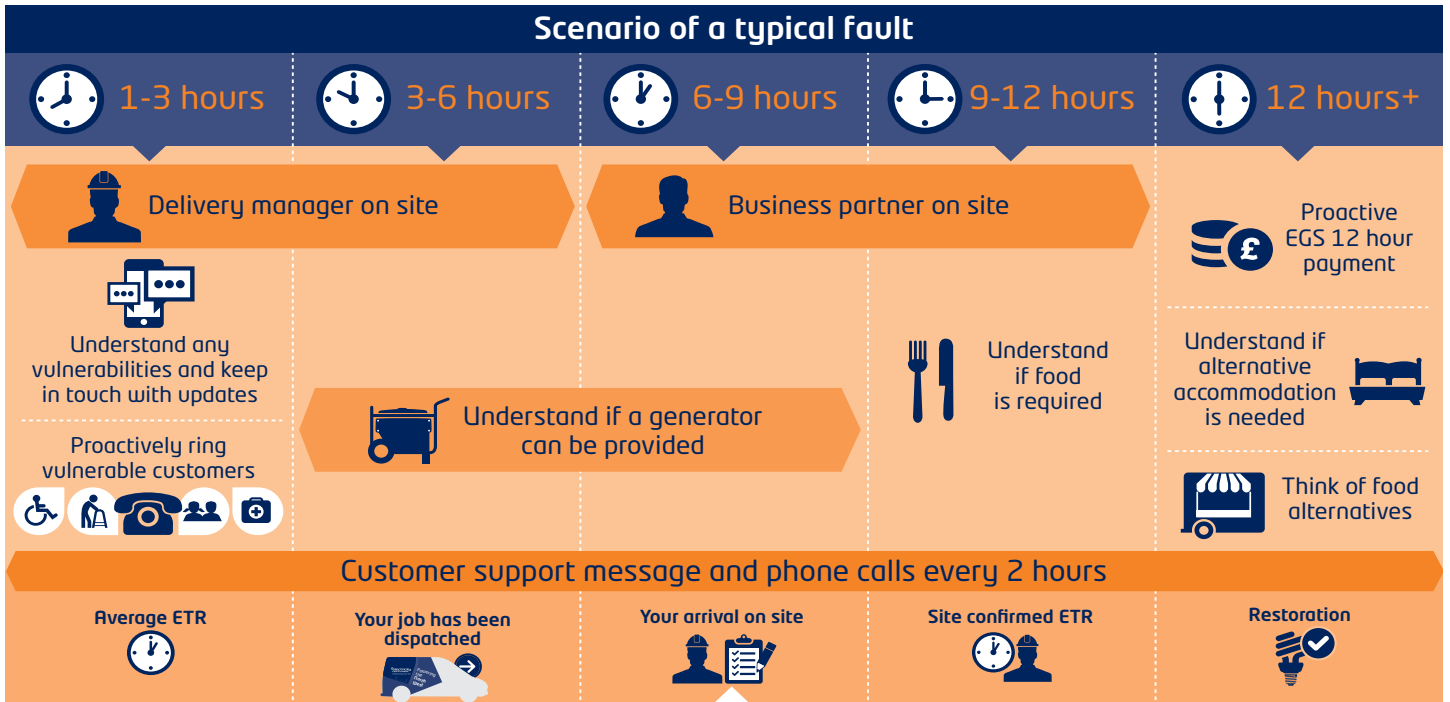
Through engaging with these customers about their unique needs during a loss of power we committed to:

- Proactively keeping customers updated about the time of restoration
- Signposting trusted information sources for common medicines e.g. insulin
- Working with partners e.g. Diabetes UK to train our contact centre colleagues on how best to handle queries of this nature and support customers.

Insights like this that get to the heart of consumer's needs are core to our continuous improvement approach. We repeat our analysis annually to identify gaps and areas of focus.

The infographic outlines the stages that are tailored associated to the duration of the fault as a standard, but as in all situations the contact centre agent and operational colleagues can decide to bring forward any deliverables based on the situation of the customer they are engaged with.

3 ED1 Journey so far



Any customer with specific needs is directly contact throughout the journey by our customer welfare advisor to ensure that additional support is offered and sourced according the situation.

KEY ACHIEVEMENT 4: Delivering joined-up services with trusted partners

Performance highlights

100 partnerships (28 new this year)

Partnerships aligned to 4 key areas of risk

4 risk factors
Physical health, mental health, difficulty in accessing services and economic stability

We recognise that our partners are sometimes better placed than us to deliver the enhanced support electricity users in vulnerable circumstances require. Following our embedded partnership strategy, we review our partnerships annually against our strategic plans, risk factors and identify trusted organisations to fill any existing gaps.

During COVID-19 the world as we knew it changed. The pandemic intensified the everyday challenges our customers face with paying their energy bills, their physical health, mental health, livelihoods and difficulty in accessing services.

In 2020 our stakeholders challenged us to support a broader range of electricity users in vulnerable circumstances. In response we expanded the range of circumstances supported beyond providing support to PSR members and those who are socially isolated or fuel poor to reach more disabled people, carers of dementia patients, those with mental health challenges, temporary life changes (e.g. post hospital recovery) or customers most at risk of digital exclusion. 85% of our annual partnership investment is now aligned to key areas of risk identified by our data – this ensures we have the right partners in the right place at the right time.

Our engagement with the next generation of energy users has increased with the introduction of two major youth group partners to raise awareness of the energy transition and what this might mean for our communities, particularly for those people living in vulnerable circumstances. Girl Guiding North West and Inspire Youth Group Chorley are creating scalable and replicable effective messaging campaigns and practical support about 4 key messages for the next generation; The PSR, energy efficiency, energy transition and safety.

In response to our data and stakeholder intelligence highlighting the elevated risk of consumers struggling to pay their energy bills we have developed good practice in place-based partnership with One Manchester, a housing association, to better understand the triggers, motivators and enablers to vulnerable consumers taking up support offers, including inequalities of access to information.

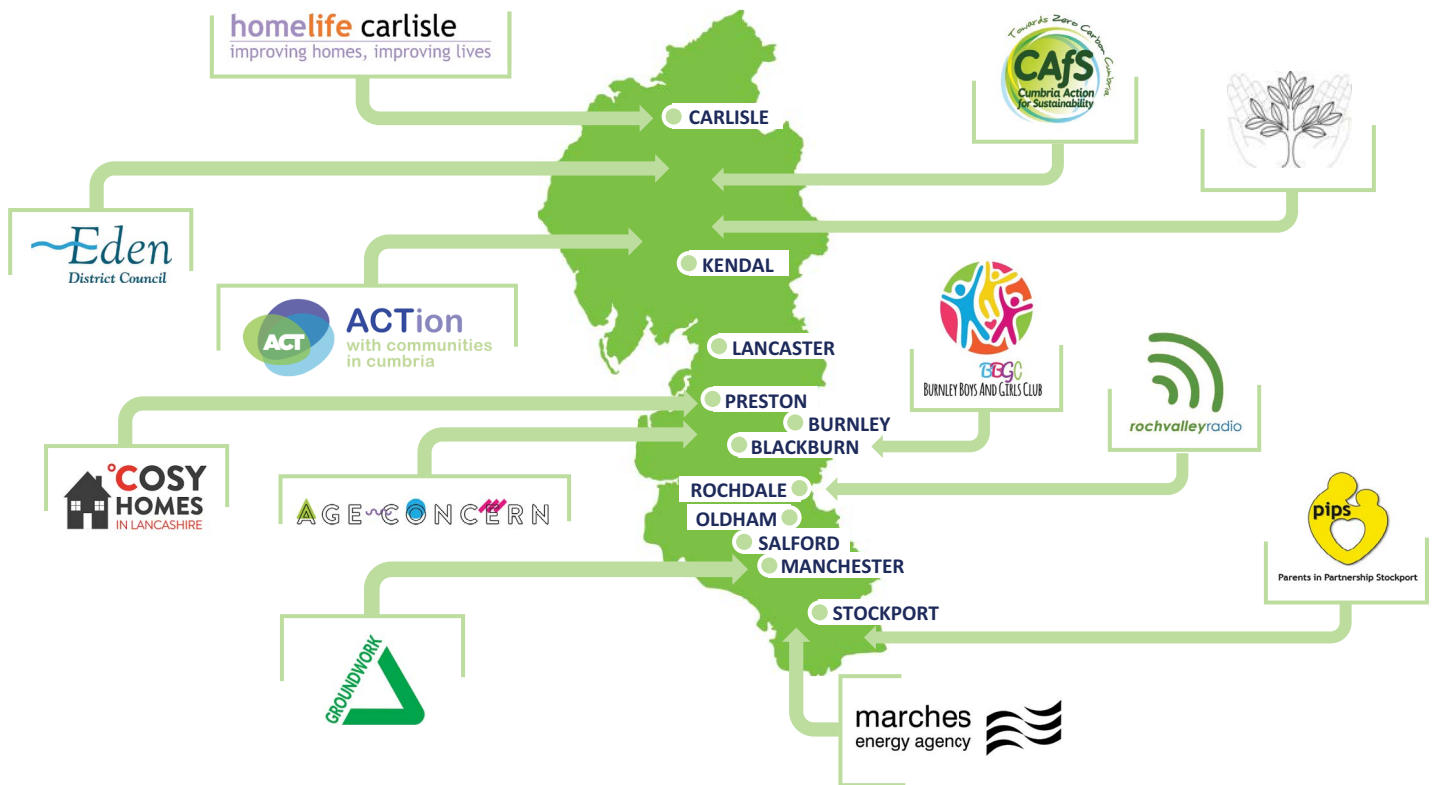
Through longitudinal research we have identified the need for a hyper-local, impactful energy efficiency campaign targeted at people with recognisable needs. Other requirements implemented included making its focus broader than energy and including messaging that would empower consumers to help themselves, save money and ultimately make their lives more comfortable. This will reduce demand on the network, therefore supporting the ambition of net zero.

Learning from our experience regarding the barriers to consumers taking up support offers, we are leading an initiative with Utilities Together and our strategic partner Citizens Advice Manchester. We have identified a gap in the provision of advice which is not being updated to help customers start to understand and prepare for the energy transition to low carbon using new gadgets, appliances and technology. In readiness for the changes ahead, we are bringing our industry insight and knowledge to energy efficiency support services and vulnerability charities, to help them become more aware of what this might mean to their service users. This includes providing training and expertise in addition to content for their educational materials.

“ Consumers who fall into the surviving and struggling mindset are also late adopters when it comes to energy efficient technology and need extra support. ”



A snapshot of some of Electricity North West Partners



Partners within the health, education sector, and Local Authorities is essential to the programme to create the ability to engage across the region with a wide range of electricity users now and future generations. As part of our programmes throughout the business these key stakeholders shape or aid the programmes of delivery for electricity users in vulnerable circumstances, achieving net zero and ensuring no one is left behind through the journey.

KEY ACHIEVEMENT 5: Tackling fuel poverty

Performance highlights

<p>Low cost DNO £80 bill vs. industry average of £93</p>	<p>Placed-based partnership identifies barriers to engagement</p>	<p>125% increase in referral pathways</p>	<p>citizens advice Manchester</p>
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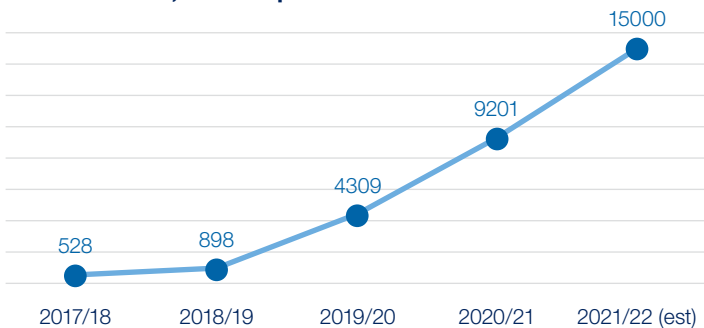
3 ED1 Journey so far

Following research by the Energy Saving Trust in 2017, which identified fuel poverty 'hot spot' areas across our network, we worked with a range of partner organisations to set up multiple new fuel poverty referral networks. Since then we have conducted longitudinal research and place-based collaboration with One Manchester, a housing association, to understand the triggers, motivators and enablers of behaviour change that drive fuel poor customers to take-up support offers. Through building fuel poor customers capacity to engage, building trust with communities, improving funding accessibility and our partners capability and resources we have been able to significantly expand our referral network and the reach of our support services.

This year our Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel warned that COVID-19 is likely to increase the number of customers struggling to pay their energy bills and exacerbate already high levels of fuel poverty in the North West (12.1%). To mitigate this increased risk we appointed Citizens Advice Manchester (CAM) as a new strategic partner. Through this investment, we have achieved an 125% increase in standard services and referral pathways from 8 to 18. The first two years of our partnership with CAM will ensure over 10,000 additional vulnerable consumers are supported.

The graph shows our ongoing growth within this area that is testament to the work we are doing together in the North West to tackle fuel poverty and provides confidence that we can meet our ED2 commitments.

29,936 fuel poor customers referrals



In tackling fuel poverty and the research we have been carrying out we recognise that for the electricity users of the North West that we have role to make support accessible building on our relationship to ensure that we are a trusted source of information to aid in the transition to Net Zero and having a whole systems approach built into our services helps us achieve this relationship with the end user.

The relationship with electricity users and DNO's is fragmented and generally needs based on the reliability of supply, to allow the region to meet the challenging targets for Net Zero and understand how to drive energy efficiency electricity users need to have confidence and trust in the organisation. It is therefore imperative that the brand of Electricity North West is one of an organisation that supports the region and is working together with the whole community to make a difference. Ensuring that our contact with end users provides a range of support to benefit their daily lives will increase their awareness of us, provide confidence that the organisation delivers improvements for themselves and expands the willingness to engage with us.

Electricity users experiencing a service that supports their life and works with them to enable them to make changes in a way that suits them is key to achieving the energy transition and not leaving anyone behind.

Throughout the ED1 journey Electricity North West have delivered continual improvement in the outputs, research and learnings providing the electricity users of the North West to receive an improved service, increased reliability and grow the relationship we have with the people we serve.



4 The four pillars of our strategy

The strategy creation is underpinned by stakeholder and customer engagement that highlighted the need to drive continuous improvement while also being responsive to change, whether from external markets or customer needs.

Creating a flow of information to help us learn and develop is vital for continuous improvement of our service. Working with a network of experts on vulnerability we will create, develop and implement innovation to ensure we do not leave anyone behind.

The engagement carried out across all our strategies for RIIO-ED2 has formed part of the journey to reach this point and led to the outcome of our primary strategy statement.

The strategy is built on a foundation of principles that have been derived from the feedback from customers and stakeholders and co-created with our Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel. These principles will be embedded throughout the organisation.

They are:

- Inclusion
- Accessibility
- Awareness and education
- Innovation
- Considering Transience
- Listening and learning through feedback loops and insight
- Designing everything with vulnerability in mind
- Networking together internally and externally

The strategy and principles are aimed to bring the sector and their end users into a relationship where there is knowledge and consciousness of the need and changes that affect everyone's lives in relation to the provision of electricity.

Strategy



'Providing an inclusive and supportive service for all users of electricity in a rapidly changing world - recognising need and maximising reach of services provided through collaborative, innovative working with a community of trusted partners across our region.'



4 The four pillars of our strategy

Supporting the strategy to provide direction and clarity on the areas Electricity North West will continue to develop are the Pillars for Success. The pillars are four areas that contain detailed action plans to ensure the continual improvement to achieve the overarching goal, reviewed through an ongoing internal and external process.

Incorporating the feedback we have received to date, and to guarantee the strategy meets the needs of our stakeholders, customers, Ofgem and Electricity North West community, we have detailed four pillars to support the strategy:

Inclusive innovation	Community intelligence	Collaborative network	Service to electricity users
Continue to increase accessible ways the electricity network can support and prevent vulnerable circumstances, developing awareness of opportunities and ensure inclusion for all not leaving anyone behind	Utilisation of demographics, segmentation and feedback supported through open data recognise changing needs continually improving for electricity users and the communities of the North West	Continue to work with new and existing trusted experts, experienced partners, growing the network to maximise reach and support to ensure no one is left behind in the rapidly changing world	Build strong communications channels that are accessible, raising awareness to create relationships with the electricity users of the North West. Delivering a reliable electricity supply to all to ensure that impact on those in vulnerable circumstances is minimised

Measuring the Outcomes

In each pillar we have provided an overview of the measures, the current performance is what we do today and the additional minimum and stretch will be building on current performance as above and beyond.

The minimum performance is based over the 5 year period and will deliver the baseline performance required from Ofgem and the funding built into the business plan will deliver above the minimum

performance and as efficiencies are realised the funding will be utilised striving towards achievement of the stretch performance. Ongoing performance improvement and learning through the research and vulnerability funding will provide the means to deliver towards the stretch performance to meet our customer and stakeholder challenges. There may be requirement for additional funding to reach the full stretch performance.



4.1 Inclusive innovation

Continue to look for accessible ways that the electricity network can support electricity users in vulnerable circumstances, developing engagement to ensure awareness of opportunities and ensure inclusion for all, not leaving anyone behind.

The risk of communities being left behind is a significant concern for us as the implications are multi-faceted. Developing a whole energy system to supply the region, addressing the transformation to achieve Net Zero and maintain high performance standards in a world more reliant on electricity will be incredibly challenging. The range of impacts for both electricity users and for electricity network companies are extensive.

As the electricity network develops to meet the decarbonisation challenges, such as potential spikes in electricity demand at peak times, the risks presented are likely to lead to increased costs. This could have a substantial impact on those who are not able to access the opportunities of future technology. We want to ensure all customers are treated fairly and equally, averting any risks of compounding financial hardship in a community created by barriers preventing their ability to adapt and change. By investing in schemes that financially aid the electricity user any impact on their bill from investments to deliver new energy infrastructure may be offset by new efficiencies.

Electricity North West want to ensure all customers are treated fairly and equally, averting any risks of compounding financial hardship in a community created by barriers preventing their ability to adapt and change.

Electricity users may be able to help the energy network operate more efficiently in the future by engaging in processes that utilise any flexibility they may have in their electricity use. Where use of this flexibility is more cost effective than investing in expensive additional network capacity, providing this flexibility may be rewarded. As electricity users engage in this process, possibly using technology to manage their engagement with the electricity system, users who are not able to participate may pay higher costs than those who could engage. This disadvantage may compound issues associated with fuel poverty and other vulnerabilities.

It is therefore important for us to support electricity users through relevant new and existing trusted partners, to make accessible champions to ensure they can access the support provided through the welfare system, energy efficiency support and other means to keep their lives on track. We will work with partners to help users create capacity to engage and be ready for the future not being left behind successfully taking advantage of keeping their bills low.

Development and research

There is also a clear role for us to develop our electricity network using an awareness of the vulnerabilities within the region and, where possible, minimise the risk of creating barriers. Creating a clear focus within our management structure to bring together the technical innovation and customer feedback of what assists electricity users to participate in the change is essential to our success.

Ongoing research that we are carrying out with 'One Manchester' to increase engagement in communities that are hard to reach, including communities where there are high levels of fuel poverty, has shown that disengaged groups are at significant risk of being left behind. Electricity users may have other priorities in their life due to financial, situational or emotional difficulties. If these issues mean that they are focused by necessity on the 'here and now' managing their daily priorities, they are described as being in a 'survival mode'. In such a situation, these electricity users are not looking to engage on areas such as the transition to Net Zero or to take advantage of long-term financial changes that do not deliver an immediate benefit.

This research is extremely important in supporting the development of our strategy for ED2 that tackles the challenge of 'not leaving anyone behind'. It shows that these hard to reach communities are at real risk of seeing change as a risk they are not willing to take. Removing these barriers and increasing our understanding of how to empower these communities through knowledge transfer and education is fundamental to many other strategies across the business including energy system transition and Net Zero.

Electricity user and stakeholder feedback shows substantial support for DNOs to lead changes that require little interaction from the user such as Smart Street, where customers can financially benefit from network change without the need for individual behaviour change. The strategy recognises that to achieve a successful and fairer transition to Net Zero all positive interventions are required, those requiring network change and those requiring behavioural change. Therefore, engagement is fundamental to achieve long term behavioural change in both electricity users and the electricity industry.



4 The four pillars of our strategy

Potential new Ofgem obligations associated to this pillar are detailed below

Understand new forms of vulnerability, by identifying blockers to participating in a smart flexible energy system

- Have an extensive network of partnerships with a range of organisation types, including from beyond the energy sector.
- Make effective use of referral channels and signposting support to customers. This will primarily be done through customer service teams, but we expect Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) to seek opportunities to maximise consumer touchpoints.
- Be involved in two-way flow partnerships supporting vulnerable customers, in line with the companies understanding of social issues in their region. This should include the network company having direct involvement in the end to end process of delivering support, providing expertise and co-creating schemes. Where appropriate, we would expect to see example schemes where the DNO is taking a leading role.
- Have a clear process for identifying which partnerships are likely to be most effective at delivering benefits through co-operative working. This should be clearly linked to the priority areas of focus of the strategy, addressing fuel poverty and supporting those at risk of being left behind by the energy system transition.

The key challenges to overcome in delivering the strategy

1. Barriers that affect a community's ability to participate have can be seen as outside our direct remit of intervention. We don't always have the means or scope to rectify some situations on our own. However, there is a need for us to be part of the solution to these challenges as a socially responsible and trusted organisation, to meet demands placed on our electricity network, to maintain an efficient organisation using our customers' money wisely, and to develop to meet the future needs of the region and as members of the community.

How do we propose to tackle this?

By working with a collaborative network of partners that can provide services and support which increase the opportunity for people to make positive changes in their lives that are sustainable and enhancing. This will create capacity for people to engage on a wider range of topics and reduce the risk these electricity users are not left behind.

We can be part of the solution by utilising funding opportunities to support these partners organisations. Increasing their accessibility and awareness creates a positive outcome and relationship with the electricity user that opens the door to engagement and education opportunities.

Our collaborative network pillar focuses on ensuring we work with all sectors to understand the impacts on people's lives and working together to remove these barriers. This network is open to all sectors including but not limited to charities, Local Authorities and other service providers.

The emotional drive for us as humans to improve and protect our families and homes is fundamental in behavioural change. For some in our communities the future is something that can only be addressed once the present is not a risk. Addressing immediate challenges in the lives of electricity users through referrals to the appropriate support services will allow us to work with communities and households, helping them participate in the journey of energy system transition and Net Zero changes and look forward to prospects that will benefit them and their children.



2. Ensure all barriers in our direct control are removed through the design of services and continually developed as we implement changes that address current and emerging vulnerabilities. Understanding the issues and links between these issues that are a risk to the successful implementation of change. Increasing knowledge to better assess the level of impact prevents unintentional costs and consequences to electricity users from the services we provide.



How do we propose to tackle this?

Increasing our community intelligence by engaging with stakeholders and communities, working through a multi-level approach covering the region, local business needs and electricity users lives allows us to assess current electricity needs and prioritise our support and strategies to fit dynamically with the knowledge we attain.

Having a culture that undertakes vulnerability risk assessments as we implement plans or change approaches to address financial or emotional impact. Having our colleagues trained in recognizing and supporting vulnerability will ensure that as customers engage with us through a multi-channel approach we maximise the contact to ensure they access the help and services they need.

Create funding opportunities for us to lead or participate in developments that support those experiencing vulnerability and remove barriers following engagement, research, learning and feedback. This continued programme following on from the One Manchester research will allow us to understand barriers of engagement utilising the knowledge of expert partners to show what Electricity North West need to do to drive engagement and success of increased uptake in the Priority Services, low carbon technology and the services provided during a loss of supply.

Creating an opportunity for other organisations outside of the industry to educate us on best practices, new innovative ways to interact with electricity users such as experienced in ED1 examples such as power save challenge, energy efficiency programmes and technology to create safety in password schemes to protect from scammers is important as technology changes.

3. Delivering a valuable service that makes a difference to the lives of those living with vulnerabilities.

How do we propose to tackle this?

Creating standard business processes that demonstrate the financial benefit to the electricity user in vulnerable circumstances exceeds any costs to deliver the overall services we provide now and in the future.

Using our partners and the vulnerability engagement fund in the Collaborative network pillar provides the means for ENWL to build two way flow partnerships supporting the social issues within the region such as the availability of low carbon technology, digital exclusion or rural isolation and together we will co create or lead projects to learn and deliver change that will make a difference to people's lives. The fund will allow for trials to be carried out with clear expected outcomes, through a qualification process that will align to stakeholder and customer feedback highlighting areas that require improvement.

The success of all the trials will be measured through the Social return of investment model, all successful outcomes will then be taken forward to be embedded within the organisation.

Continually develop a measure through the Social Return of Investment measure (SROI) as developed as a consistent and transparent measure with all DNO's that provides the ability to understand the benefit factor to assess the value of service delivery and is the investment meeting the criteria of a minimum benefit and the impact on the bill.

All partnerships are created with clear agreed expectations of performance, reporting and outcomes. Partnership managers are appointed to work with each partner to maximize performance, learning and share best practice to deliver a value add service bringing customers on the journey and removing the risk of being left behind.

Annually all partnerships are reviewed against the agreed measures and SROI to decide whether the partnership could continue, change or stop.

Our stakeholders have shared their views that fuel poverty will continue to increase through the ED2 period and that there is a necessity for all energy companies and suppliers to make their most of their relationships as there is a lack of any other funding to tackle this issue. Working with our current delivery partners and recognizing there are other partners available to support the delivery of a £2 million investment to reach 50,000 homes per annum within the North West our network of stakeholders and partners have committed that together we can scale up to deliver the proposed outputs with the financial support.

The benefits for customer who receive support will be measured through the interventions carried out including:

- Income maximisation
- Behavioural changes & education
- Energy efficiency measures implemented
- Boiler replacements
- Tariffs benefits including water social tariffs
- Health and wellbeing
- Prevention of self-disconnection
- Accessing funding grants

4. Bringing our organisation together to deliver the changes with clarity of focus on our principles through every day business.

How do we propose to tackle this?

A new senior role has been established that creates balance between technical knowledge of the energy transition, our network and customer needs. The team will lead on the designing the strategy to deliver customer segmented engagement, lead our Strategic Stakeholder panel on vulnerability and work with our technical experts on inclusive developments to a smarter future including distribution system operation (DSO), Net Zero and future developments.

The team will lead the research and learning of our data strategies and engagement to represent the electricity users voice with clear metrics in place to measure success.

4 The four pillars of our strategy

What is SROI

SROI is an analytical methodology we use to calculate the monetary value associated with positive outcomes received, and costs avoided by society because of a given initiative. This assessment helps us to evaluate the value derived by consumers in terms of our investment in different partnerships and initiatives.

Outcomes and Measures

The outcomes from this pillar are:

- Removal of barriers increasing the participation in the Net Zero targets and uptake of new technology
- ENWL being a trusted brand of the North West increasing the participation in energy efficiency and decarbonisation, reducing demand on the electricity network
- Increased accessibility of ENWL support and registration of the Priority Services
- Increase the uptake of the trusted services provided to the Priority Services members
- Customers able to access information to allow them to make the choices that suit their lives
- Reduced customer touch points enabling simpler access to support and information



Activity	Current performance	Minimum performance	Stretch performance	Information
Supporting those in fuel poverty to access the support they need to improve their situation	10,000 interventions of support £1million customer direct benefit	25,000 per annum access support £7 million customer direct benefit	30,000 per annum access support £10.5 million customer direct benefit	The customer benefit is derived from the social return on investment mechanism and is the financial benefit direct to the recipient.
	15,000 made aware of support	25,000 per annum aware of support	30,000 per annum aware of support	
	Smart Street delivered to 64,000 homes	Delivering to 250,000 homes		
	Best practice working across the partnership network	Implementing developments from industry and sector trials to create new minimum requirements. With outcomes to increase % uptake of referrals to all available service through the partnerships	Fund learning of new ways to remove barriers and address new vulnerabilities our business develops. I.e issuing funding mechanisms that look to how we engage with the future generations of electricity users	
Maximising the one contact customer benefit of investment – excluding the fuel poverty support	SROI currently provides £89 benefit minimum across the partnership network	Increase the average benefit to £125	Increase the average benefit to £175	Through the collaboration network, share best practices and bring support networks together for those in need.

4.2 Community intelligence

Utilisation of demographics, segmentation and feedback supported through additional data services to recognise needs, increasing understanding to continually improve for individual electricity users and the communities of the North West

Across the region there are multiple causes of vulnerability and we have developed a social data mapping tool to create a graphic representation of customers on the Priority Services Register and community levels of vulnerability causes. There are 28 data sets that are combined to create a heat map by postcode. The data is then used to inform the decision making within our organisation, supported by the Strategic Advisory Panel. This highlights where focus is required to strengthen the approach in areas such as:

- Supporting those in fuel poverty
- Raising awareness of the Priority Services Register to increase the recruitment
- Electricity reliability issues affecting communities with high levels of vulnerability
- Locations or sectors to grow our partnership network to enhance the service offering

Within the footprint of Electricity North West there are currently 12.1% (250,000) households that are classified as living in fuel poverty, currently there are 1.1 million homes who could join the Priority Services Register. Currently 49.5% of this population are registered leaving a short fall of 50.5% of electricity users who are not accessing this service.



Supporting our communities

Areas such as Blackpool, Blackburn, Salford and Eden show high levels of various social demographic indices that when combined with the Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel's key causes of vulnerability index highlights the need for support from us and our trusted partners.

Combining this information with additional research is critical to enhance understanding of vulnerability, accessibility and behaviours of electricity users. During 2020 two key research programmes have been initiated by us with support and guidance from our Consumer Vulnerability Advisory Panel to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown and how engagement can be increased in hard to reach communities.

From the COVID-19 report there are clear messages showing the exacerbated situation of people living in vulnerable circumstances such as domestic abuse, new unemployment and wider impacts on areas which have been heightened or rapidly changed are emerging. Blackpool has been severely impacted by the pandemic with the lack of tourism having a significant economic impact on the area. The report shows that there is increased pressure on the 3rd sector in trying to support a wider group of affected people. This demonstrates that affected people are not always accessing the support they need, creating a higher risk of vulnerability.

4 The four pillars of our strategy

Using data to make improvements

Using the data from the Priority Services Register and the additional services through collaborative networks provides us with the opportunity to access data showing where communities are not engaging with current and future changes across the region. We will focus the strategy on these communities. By removing barriers to engagement and increasing support with the energy system transition so we can reduce the risk of people being left behind. The strategy will also seek to ensure that any potential increase in the costs of the electricity network will not disproportionately disadvantage electricity users made vulnerable by the circumstances they are experiencing.

To understand the vulnerability issues consumers face in the north west and enhance our intelligence-led approach we will continue to work with organisations to share information and research to support our communities. Recently commissioned a research study to provide insights on the anticipated longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our customers in vulnerable circumstances, risk factors, and emerging trends and challenges in specific localities. The findings highlighted that four most prominent COVID-19 enduring risk factors are:

- Physical health, most starkly for those in the oldest age groups and with underlying health conditions
- Mental health and wellbeing impacts, which are unevenly skewed towards the most deprived areas
- Economic impacts in terms of business closures and loss of employment and incomes, especially for the low paid and young people, and extending to those who have been 'just about managing'
- Difficulty in accessing services and support for those without digital connectivity, and for at-risk groups who rely on support, such as refugees, the elderly, and those facing domestic abuse.

Using the vulnerability fund we will continue to learn how to remove the barriers to the adoption of smart technology.

The Priority service register uses the 28 needs codes and allows people to register to be supported but many customers do not see themselves as needing help and this is where we work with communities and our data and trusted partners to come together and provide us with a wider range of vulnerabilities that can affect people.



Working with our stakeholders

Working with our stakeholders we have come to recognise that vulnerability data on its own is a narrow perspective through which we can understand the circumstances that causes vulnerability and how they become a barrier to participation in the energy system transition. Through our engagement the raw data needs to be interlinked with wider information such as behavioural understanding, how to remove barriers, social links within a community, deeper knowledge about electricity users and their lives.

This engagement has helped us identify the pillar we have called **Community intelligence**, which builds upon the current focus on vulnerability data within our existing strategy.

The development embraces a wider range of information that can be utilised in a multi-dimensional approach to understand the challenges being faced by electricity users. Specifically, it widens the scope of our understanding to be situational, for example understanding the interface between transient vulnerability and a long-term mobility condition, and this understanding assists us in removing barriers to engagement.

Potential new Ofgem obligations associated to this pillar are detailed below

Maximise opportunities to identify, and deliver support to, consumers in vulnerable situations through smart use of data

- Utilise social indicator or vulnerability mapping to inform their service development and partnership strategy. This approach may form part of the PSR management, but the identification of vulnerability should not be limited to PSR registrations.
- Maintain a good understanding of the social issues associated with the scope of the DNOs role, the prevalence of these within their consumer base and how they are evolving.

4 The four pillars of our strategy

The key challenges to overcome in delivering the strategy

1. Data protection and availability of data being used to drive decisions.

How do we propose to tackle this?

Work with the industry and other sectors to be open and transparent with data sources, creating an accessible database of information that represents the communities we serve. Use innovation with other energy sector participants to develop common approaches for external data sharing to simplify the accessibility of data and work together to drive benefits for GB and our region.

2. Disseminated information from customers and their need to share information is a blocker to many services.

How do we propose to tackle this?

Working cross industry and through our partnership network to create a one contact strategy for registering individual's needs and providing them with the support they need. Building a platform that supports the region ensuring everyone can monitor new and emerging trends as a collaborative approach and is transparent to all.

3. Discovering new and emerging vulnerabilities that affect our region so that we can continually develop our services and avoid barriers to accessibility or support. Many vulnerabilities and social issues are not produced by the DNO but can be blockers or barriers to the success of the DNO if not addressed. Understanding the issues and links between these issues addresses risks to the successful implementation of change by the business. Increasing knowledge to assess the level of impact prevents unintentional costs and consequences to electricity users arising as a result of the way services are provided.

How do we propose to tackle this?

Increasing our data insights through community information and collaborative networks. We will use stakeholder and customer engagement to help us learn, develop and design with inclusivity at the core of our research and service implementation. To achieve this, we need to expand our engagement activities and broaden our networks to increase collaboration directly with the electricity users and referral networks of specialists. We will target the appropriate specialists by using a segmentation of needs and demographic information, continually developing our social indicator data mapping tools.

Creating customer funded focuses groups allows the development of co-created processes and communication channels specifically associated to the style and needs of the different demographics to deliver targeted support reducing the disruption in loss of supply and increasing awareness of the opportunities for electricity users to keep their bills low. These groups will be developed through use of data to show the gaps by needs code in uptake of the PSR, by location affected by loss of supply or low uptake LCT. As the data is continually refreshed, and gaps reduce new groups or locations will rise as priority leading to new customer focuses groups and research being carried out.

Using the social data mapping tool to highlight communities that have multi faceted social difficulties, the data collected from the Priority Service register showing volumes of vulnerabilities and lack of registrations layering this information with our network performance allows us to focus the recruitment of new partnerships to ensure we are reaching those who are in need.

4. Showing the benefit of partnerships to address future electricity demand requirements and avoid the need for investment in new electricity infrastructure.

How do we propose to tackle this?

Utilising data from multiple sources, including smart meters and geographic demand patterns, we can monitor the effect of targeted interventions on energy efficiency, social support and system capability.

Using the vulnerability fund we will carry out research and trials to ensure that we can remove the blockers for those identified as least likely to take up smart energy offers.

The barriers identified so far include:

- Digital literacy
- Financial situations and payback periods
- Broadband capacity and capability
- Housing situations, such as rented accommodation
- Energy need dependant of the characteristics of the occupants i.e. customers with low mobility
- Mental health
- Learning disabilities

Measuring success in balancing the electricity demands from low carbon technologies with flexible solutions and the involvement of targeted communities in those flexible solutions will demonstrate that we have removed barriers to engagement.

4 The four pillars of our strategy

Outcomes and Measures

The outcomes from this pillar are:

- Removal of barriers increasing the participation in the Net Zero targets and uptake of new technology
- Continual development of the services provided to improve customer experience in a power cut
- Communities engaged through tailored inclusive communications
- Increased accessibility of ENWL support and registration of the Priority Services
- Reduced customer touch points enabling simpler access to support and information

Activity	Current performance	Minimum performance	Stretch performance	Information
One contact support service	Shared data registering with energy suppliers, water and gas industry within the North West and current partnerships	A single portal of registering and accessing data for all third sector and utilities for the North West Region	Driving and Implementing a single Priority Services Register across GB	
Open data	Social data mapping includes 28 data sources externally and ENWL PSR volumes and is shared with trusted partners	Create community led information that represents the needs and demographics of the population available through open sources Increasing the volume of data sets year on year	Single GB social data mapping across the industry – open data Proactively understand how other organisations use our data and measuring the benefits through SROI	
Data sources to Horizon Scan for vulnerability	28 data sets & partners feedback	25% increase in data sets identifying vulnerabilities to support the PSR campaigns and reach	50% increase in data sets identifying vulnerabilities to support the PSR campaigns and reach	
Removal of barriers		New customer engaged panels to shape the future processes and expected outcomes aligned to SROI and PSR gap reduction to achieve up to 80%	Increase the PSR uptake over 80%	



4.3 Collaborative network

Continue to work with trusted experts and experienced partners, building and developing the network to maximise reach and support delivered. Ensure no one is left behind in the rapidly changing world

We provide an electrical supply to 2.4 million properties across the North West region achieving a 99.9% reliability performance. The network is continually affected by weather, aging components and changing customer requirements necessitating a continual need for maintenance, development and improvement.

To deliver a truly inclusive approach for the electricity users, all colleagues within the company need to recognise causes of vulnerability and design network and support services that the company delivers with this information in mind. Our consultation to date has shown that we need to take the risk of being left behind into account when designing improvements.

Embracing improvements in a changing landscape

Our innovation strategy embraces this culture and through RIIO-ED1 there have been some great examples of improvements where electricity users can benefit without needing to consciously change or adapt their behaviour. This approach removes the risk of some communities being left behind. A key example of this innovation implementation is the Smart Street technology roll-out. For further info www.enwl.co.uk/smartstreet

The focus on improving reliability is key to removing the disruption from electricity users lives as reliance increases and introduces new vulnerabilities. Supporting someone by preventing the risk of supply interruptions or reduce the duration of supply loss minimizes the impact without the electricity users having to adapt or change.

It is therefore essential that the culture of the organisation seeks to remove the risk of exclusion where possible through design and through feedback from partners and charities who support vulnerability within the region. During 2021 we appointed a senior board member as the Vulnerability Champion to work along side our senior managers within the business.

Understanding of the risks and the changing landscape that can create vulnerability can be strengthened through additional engagement directly with those being affected as mentioned in section 3. To learn and understand the impacts through horizon scanning, we will continue to work through collaborative networks and stakeholder panels.

Wider engagement with current and future generations of electricity users will deliver opportunities for us to increase knowledge of what can make users vulnerable and the changes we can make to respond to this.

Potential new obligations associated with this pillar

Embed the approach to protecting the interests of consumers in vulnerable situations throughout a company's operations to maximise the opportunities to deliver support.

- Have processes in place for embedding a commitment to protecting the interests of vulnerable customers. This should include a well justified approach to ensuring all staff have received an appropriate form of vulnerability training to maximise the potential from all customer touchpoints. Companies should make use of external advice and support to set strategic direction, such as a vulnerability advisory or research panel. DNOs should appoint a vulnerability champion at senior management or board level.
- Seek opportunities to protect vulnerable customers throughout their capabilities.

The key challenges to overcome in delivering the strategy

1. Continually keeping all our colleagues aware and informed on current and new vulnerabilities that emerge so that we are proactive in our approach.

How do we propose to tackle this?

We strive to embrace diversity and inclusion in our culture, enabling our colleagues to have a great understanding of these areas and where vulnerability creates additional considerations in the work we do. Our Diversity and Inclusion strategy (annex 15) is built around four key pillars that underpin our vision of being truly representative of the communities we serve. The Community pillar is focussed on driving positive change through working with community partnerships. Through building a Collaborative Network we will be better placed to deliver against our commitments to customers and improve diversity and inclusion by having colleagues who are more informed.

We have success in this way to date through sharing learning and best practice and support between our colleagues and customers about mental wellbeing. This can be enhanced through an amplified training structure that provides insights and awareness for colleagues to incorporate within their daily roles, supporting electricity users. A regular training programme will be developed for all roles. This will be refreshed through the community information programme and through working with our stakeholders and partners.

Continuing to build our internal commitment to our mental wellbeing strategy that focuses on three key areas is essential to support the ongoing culture transition to understanding vulnerable circumstances that can affect anyone. The programme supports everyone recognising impacts on their lives, increasing their awareness and ability to recognise concerns and challenges through engagement with colleagues and electricity users.

Reduce stigma and tackle discrimination

Empower colleagues to maintain and improve their wellbeing and situations

For our people to intervene if they see signs of mental ill health or vulnerability and take steps to support and learn to improve

4 The four pillars of our strategy

2. Safeguarding those that cannot protect themselves.

How do we propose to tackle this?

Continually training our colleagues who work directly with members of the public, especially electricity users in vulnerable circumstances, to ensure that we can intervene with support from our partners and understand the risks where certain vulnerabilities are exacerbated by a loss of electricity. Building increased network reliability in areas where high concentrations of vulnerability are indicated by our social data mapping.

Some people choose not to join a Priority Services Register, so by utilising data to identify hard to reach communities that are affected by higher levels of vulnerability, we can intervene, remove the risk of loss of supply and reduce anxiety or make it easier for electricity users to sustain their management of their circumstance.

Introducing a wider range of face to face customer engagement panels, working with our colleagues and partners to increase our understanding of their needs and challenges aiding us to shape our future processes and interventions to meet the needs of their individual characteristics associated to their vulnerabilities.

The vulnerability engagement fund will focus on how ENWL leverage their relationship with the homes of the North West to continually learn on improved engagement activities that bring people on the journey, Increasing understanding of how customer drivers of health, wellbeing and their homes can incorporate knowledge and education of energy efficiency and LCT adoption.

The current One Manchester research has created a platform for us to continue to build on with further trials by disseminating the information to be tailored to suit the demographics such as, cognitive impairments due to the impact on individuals routines that require change and support to be adopted. Each area requires investment to carry out trials to learn and then educate ENWL and partners in the changes we need to make to be successful.

Outcomes and Measures

The outcomes derived from this pillar are:

- Reduction in the disruption to vulnerable customers created by power cuts
- Removal of barriers increasing the participation in the Net Zero targets and uptake of new technology
- Continual development of the services provided to improve customer experience in a power cut
- Increased accessibility of ENWL support and registration of the Priority Services
- Increase the uptake of the trusted services provided to the Priority Services members
- Reduced customer touch points enabling simpler access to support and information



4 The four pillars of our strategy

Activity	Current performance	Minimum performance	Stretch performance	Information
Training our colleagues in recognising and supporting vulnerable circumstances	All colleagues who work in customers premises or provide telephony support are trained in the services and recognising vulnerability.	100% of colleagues trained through a tiered level approach of education and awareness aligned to their roles and responsibilities to recognise and reduce vulnerabilities	Include the training of awareness of the energy impacts through 100% of our trusted partners to maximise reach with every touch point	Awareness training to include factors to vulnerability i.e. digital exclusion, rural isolation and regional economic impact
	All colleague training commitment to Mental wellbeing every 12 months	100% of colleagues trained with all new and emerging mental wellbeing linking the impacts of changing circumstances i.e. power failures	Sharing the training and engagement with our network of partners for best practice and developing integration of the effects of their vulnerability being compounded with Mental Wellbeing	
	495,000 direct ENWL contacts with 54,000 referred	Both the measures for contact updates and electricity users accessing referral networks will be part of the measures to sow the success of the training 600,000 direct ENWL contacts, 75,000 referred to partner networks,	700,000 direct ENWL contacts, 95,000 referred to networks	This will demonstrate cultural improvement. The measures will include how many contacts are provided by a range of ENWL employees and referral of customers for support including safeguarding activities
		Introduce an employee app to register new PSR customers and support offered. Reviewing the data to increase interactions Measure to show year on year growth on referrals		
Removing the barriers and joining the journey		Introduction of a £250k per annum fund to open applications to remove barriers of leaving anyone behind Delivering SROI benefits that have been benchmarked including but not limited to outcomes for > Share best practice and learning across sectors > Reduce inequalities and barriers that prevent behaviour change > Increase awareness and scale of take-up of existing support services and LCTs > Include hard to reach electricity users in the energy transition that would have otherwise been left behind Creating a single process for the North West to register vulnerabilities	Driving and implementing a single Priority Service Register across GB and across utility providers.	
Seeking opportunities to intervene	Worst served customer programme	Reduce the future likelihood of a loss of supply for 17,000 customers with known high vulnerabilities		

4 The four pillars of our strategy

4.4 Service to electricity users

Build strong communications channels that are accessible and raise awareness to create relationships with the electricity users of the North West. Focus on delivering a reliable electricity supply to all to ensure that impact on those in vulnerable circumstances is minimised.

The Priority Service Register is a database shared by all energy suppliers and distribution networks. The register has 28 different codes to capture a situation or health condition that could leave someone in a vulnerable circumstance should their electricity supply fail. These codes are very diverse covering circumstances such as children under the age of five, kidney dialysis machine, language requirements and mental health conditions. (For the full list and further details, go to www.enwl.co.uk/priority.)

Within the North West there are currently over 570,000 homes on the register out of a current possible 1.1 million homes who are eligible under Ofgem's criteria. This results in a risk that 50% of the homes do not receive the appropriate proactive service from us when they are affected by a power cut. The service also provides referrals to other organisations across the region who can assist people with additional support such as accessing financial, wellbeing and local community support.

Our commitment to service

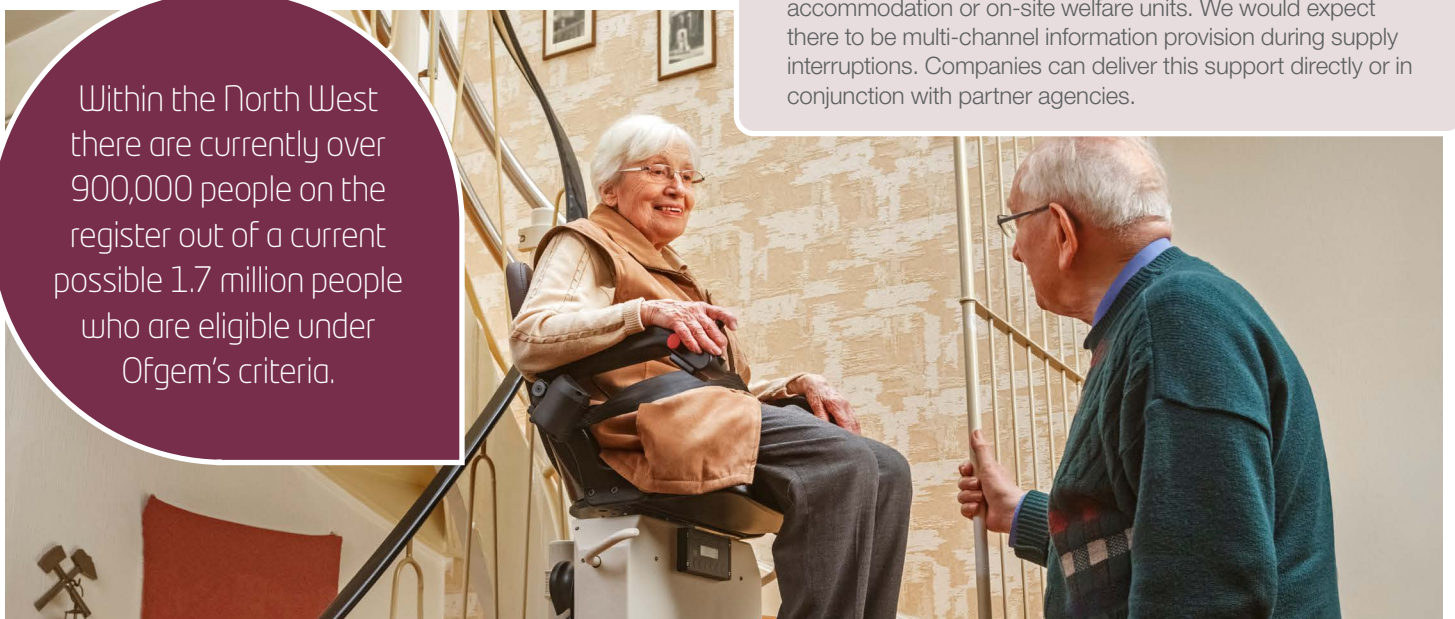
We are committed to simplifying the registration process for everyone, increasing accessibility and minimising the effort required by the electricity user. We can achieve this by increasing our network of trusted partners who, with consent, can share the data to provide services to those on the register. This includes current data sharing agreements with suppliers of gas and electricity, United Utilities and gas transporters.

Within the North West there are currently over 900,000 people on the register out of a current possible 1.7 million people who are eligible under Ofgem's criteria.

Potential new obligations associated with this pillar

Effectively support consumers in vulnerable situations, particularly those most vulnerable to a loss of supply, through a sophisticated approach to the management, promotion and maintenance of a PSR register.

- Undertake proactive and targeted advertising of the PSR and the services offered to vulnerable consumer groups. By targeted, we mean towards specific areas of highest need or where data analysis suggests there are gaps in PSR reach.
- Have an effective data and information strategy in place specific to meeting the needs of vulnerable consumers. This should include effective PSR database maintenance with customer data checks at least every 24 months. Data analysis should be used to inform the development and delivery of service offerings. DNOs should also align the approach to data sharing with suppliers and other utilities to get customers onto the PSR to the requirements of data best practice.
- Provide information for PSR customers in formats suited to a range of additional communication needs. For accessibility services, companies should meet a minimum standard of Accessibility AA. Translation services should be available for at least the top 10 Languages in a DNO area.
- Continue to increase and improve our communication channels to simplify the accessibility through web, telephone and social media platforms will remain as ongoing developments
- Have dedicated lines, and or prioritisation, available for customers registered on PSR when they need to contact the DNO.
- Deliver a wide range of support during, or in relation to, a supply interruption that reflects different customer needs and is, at a minimum, in line with existing provision. There should be a clear link between the information held about PSR customers and how this is used to target, or prioritise, support. We consider a wide range of support could include, but is not limited to, crisis packs, hot meals and drinks, mobile generation, alternative accommodation or on-site welfare units. We would expect there to be multi-channel information provision during supply interruptions. Companies can deliver this support directly or in conjunction with partner agencies.



4 The four pillars of our strategy

The key challenges to overcome in delivering the strategy

1. Having the register and maintaining contact details is essential to ensuring a successful contact every time to not delay the information and welfare provision, this removes anxiety and fear for many electricity users on a 24/7/365 basis. We operate the most reliable network in the country outside London. This can lead to electricity users feeling secure in this service and result in a view that it is not essential for PSR records to be updated.

Current engagement shows that only 1 in 5 people provide regular confirmation or updates on their contact details, leaving a risk that we cannot contact someone who may need our help. As part of our future strategy we need to strengthen the relationship with electricity users to reduce this risk and utilise information from other sectors and parts of the utility industry to capture current contact details on a regular basis.

How do we propose to tackle this?

Working with other sectors to create a regional and, potentially, a national service with a single point of contact for electricity users where information can be distributed to all relevant parties simplifying the process for customers and avoiding the cost of having multiple systems holding similar information.

Creating an ongoing relationship reflecting all the services that customers can benefit from and utilise whilst being part of the Priority Service Register outside the need of help during a power cut.

2. Removing the barriers to ensure everyone eligible to register has the foundation to make choices. As we share information, this will increase their understanding of the opportunities they can take as the industry develops and we become more reliant on electricity.

How do we propose to tackle this?

Increase our accessibility and improve our relationship with customers to encourage a greater uptake of our services and better record maintenance. This will be achieved through targeted, focused campaigns alongside our trusted partnering network creating a community of information and support.

Through using the social data mapping tool the network of partners will grow to reduce the gap for registrations on the Priority Service.

As an accessible service the information made available to our customers will cover a range of options including but not limited to braille, large print, telephone, social media and reflect over the top 20 non English speaking languages as a minimum within the North West.

3. Ensuring the support, we provide reaches those who have the greatest need and makes a difference to their circumstances, reducing the impact on them.

How do we propose to tackle this?

Creating an engaged relationship between the DNO and the electricity users that increases the flow of information and learnings through detailed analysis and research of needs. This will ensure the people who need the service contribute to shaping the outcome they will receive.

The community intelligence and inclusive innovation pillars will provide data to provide clear direction who any gaps in our reach. Increasing our feedback routes through the new customer advisory panels will ensure that customers are shaping the range of services we provide to deliver the outcomes to their needs.

4. Supporting electricity users to minimise anxiety and fear when they experience a loss of electricity.

How do we propose to tackle this?

Using a diverse and inclusive multi-channel approach for customers to access the information, removing barriers to engagement. Recognising that accurate information and an empathetic service is crucial to this outcome. We will therefore increase our number of available customer agents trained in welfare and vulnerability support to provide the opportunity for human engagement and not create barriers through a reliance of digital services.

All the pillars and principles support each area of the strategy, nevertheless the prioritisation of the pillar below focuses within this area.

Measuring the outcomes

To deliver on the strategy it is crucial to have clear measures that we can utilise to understand the success of the activities and the impact we are having, it ensures that our stakeholders have visibility of performance to hold us to account or challenge our progression as required.



4 The four pillars of our strategy

Outcomes and Measures

The outcomes derived from this pillar are:

- Reduction in the disruption to vulnerable customers created by power cuts
- Continual development of the services provided to improve customer experience in a power cut
- Communities engaged through tailored inclusive communications
- Increased accessibility of ENWL support and registration of the Priority Services
- Increase the uptake of the trusted services provided to the Priority Services members
- Customers able to access information to allow them to make the choices that suit their lives
- Reduced customer touch points enabling simpler access to support and information



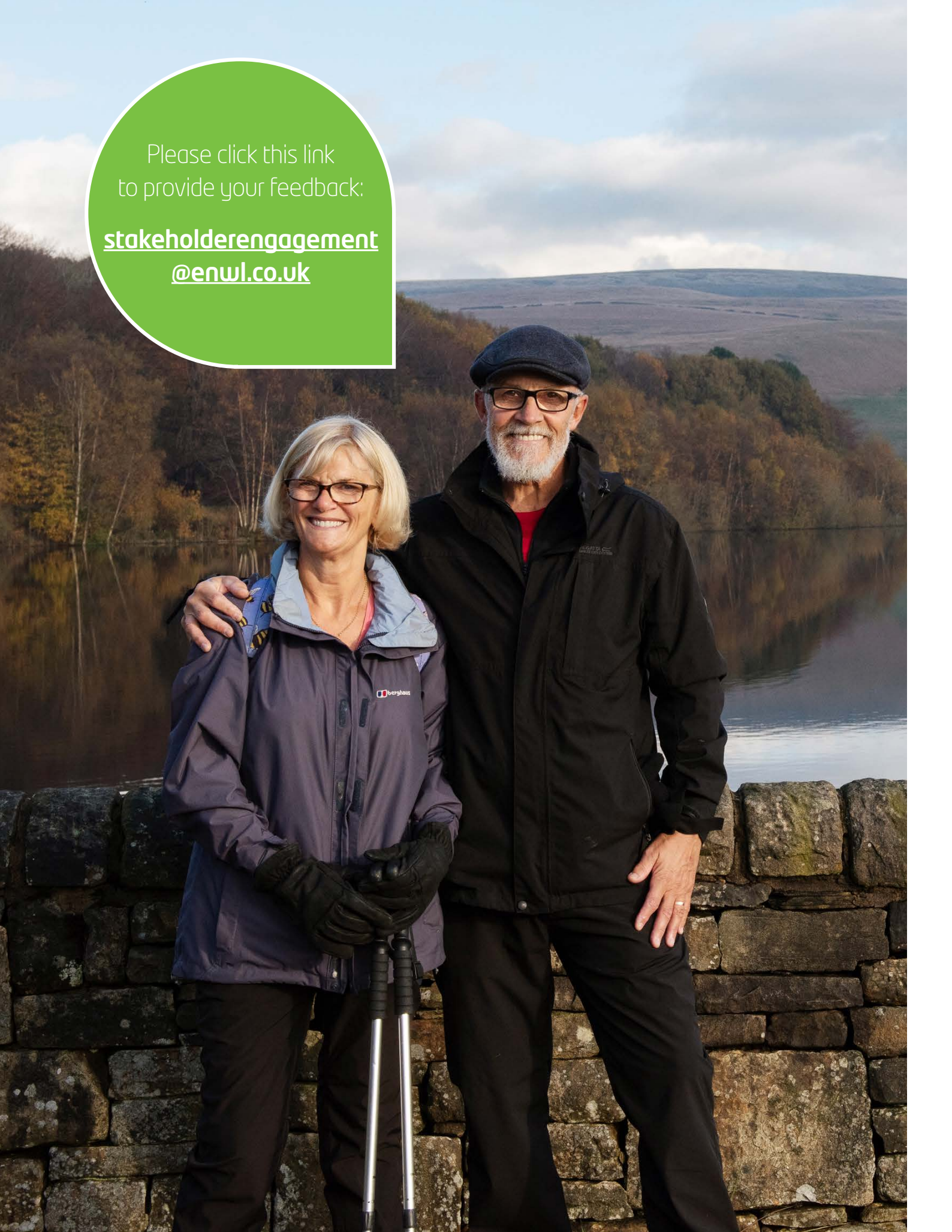
4 The four pillars of our strategy

Activity	Current performance	Minimum performance	Stretch performance	Information
Customers accessing the supportive services of the Priority Service Register	49.5% registered of 1.1million eligible properties	60% registered Introduce an employee app to register customers	80% registered	The % used is the base number of 1.1million properties is a reference at a point in time and will move. The increase will be driven by the use of the social data mapping and stakeholder feedback to focus on gaps of registered number and vulnerability caused for the Priority Service
	495,000 direct ENWL contacts with PSR registered customers regarding the services we provide during a loss of supply	600,000 direct ENWL contacts with PSR registered customers regarding the services we provide during a loss of supply	700,000 direct ENWL contacts with PSR registered customers regarding the services we provide during a loss of supply	This includes all proactive communications during a loss of supply and proactive contacts to stay close excluding any social media.
	54,520 electricity users have accessed the referral networks this year	75,000 electricity users accessing referral networks	95,000 electricity users accessing referral networks	This measure will reflect how many people access the supportive services from all trusted partners without the need of a power cut made available through ENWL
Maximising the reach of support made available to customers	Maintaining contact details, all medically dependant customers every 12 months and all others once every three years	Contacting every registered customer on a two-year cycle	Contact all medically dependant every 12 months and everyone else no greater than every two years	Increasing telephone contact, media outreach and local services to be part of customers regular engagement activities
	16% of customers update their details following contact	30% update or positive confirmations	40% and over	Range of communication formats used to remove accessibility barriers
	Customer satisfaction with the support received 91.5% during a power cut	Customer satisfaction 91% for the benefits of being on the register with or without a power cut	Customer satisfaction over 93% for the benefits of being on the register with or without a power cut	This would introduce a new mechanism to understand the benefits for customers who are not experiencing power cuts and introduce new engagement channels through customer support needed to feed into the service improvements
	The telephony system recognises all customers on the PSR and prioritises their call to an agent, current average 76% answer rate to direct to an agent. Eight dedicated experienced welfare agents for escalated concerns Hold AA accessibility and BSI standard	Increase the number of first call answer to 86% through increased resource and train all the contact centre to the higher standard of welfare support Provide translation services for all formats of communication for the top 10 non English languages in the North West Enhance the website for accessibility and functionality Maintain the AA accessibility & BSI standard	Increase the first call answer to over 95% Have dedicated resource on site to support PSR customers where interruptions exceed eight hours Utilise more local amenities as community support venues Increase accessibility standard to AAA and provide translation services in all formats for 100 languages in the North West	All current welfare support remains in place, such as meals, accommodation, generation, crisis packs and welfare units and proactive contacts for planned supply interruptions. Continuation of language services for telephony and website support.
Continually develop a service to recognise and meet the needs of the North West community	Welfare provisions and communication methods are aligned to customer feedback, number of partnerships across the North West	CSAT for PSR and targeted growth of partnerships Deliver a range of support and communication channels in line with the customer needs and preference to promote how to contact us, how to look after yourself in a power cut and what we do.	Create specific feedback groups to develop the support and communication channels	
	Current data shares with energy suppliers and utilities and current partnerships	Increasing the network utilising the current platform of data sharing to wider services across the North West	Deliver on a national system of registration and promotion	Using the community intelligence to grow the ENWL network of partners through targeted analytics of hard to reach communities

*All current performance data in the pillar tables is from April 2020 to March 2021.

Please click this link
to provide your feedback:

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Glossary of Ofgem definitions that align to our definitions

Term	Description
Social Return on Investment	The monetary value associated with positive outcomes received, and costs avoided by society because of a given initiative. Partnerships – definition expanded
Whole system	Solutions arising from energy network companies and system operators coordinating effectively, between each other and with broader areas (not just the transmission or distribution networks), which deliver value for consumers
Energy transition	The energy system transformation refers to the process by which we are changing the energy system (including power, heat, and transport), from a system based on carbon intensive fossil fuels, to one based on low carbon technology
Vulnerability	When a consumer's personal circumstances and characteristics combine with aspects of the market to create situations where he or she is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly less able than a typical consumer to protect or represent his or her interests in the energy market; and/or • Significantly more likely than a typical consumer to suffer detriment, or that detriment is likely to be more substantial
Partnerships	The relationship with a range of other companies and charities that work together through clear structured agreements to deliver and optimise the needs of all parties. Specifically, within this strategy in relation to vulnerable circumstances and the support access. Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities • Other utilities • Charity networks i.e Age UK, Stroke Association, Mind • Carer and medical support i.e. NHS services, oxygen providers • Local business • Customer service networks i.e Institute of Customer Service
Fuel Poverty	A household that spends more than 10% of its total income on fuel use, which includes heating, hot water, lighting and the use of appliances



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