



# GDN Collaborative Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

## Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

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### *Services Beyond the Meter*

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*Philip Harding – [Philip.harding@cadentgas.com](mailto:Philip.harding@cadentgas.com)*

14/12/2023

**Gas Network Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - Project Eligibility Criteria**

<b>Section 1 - Eligibility criteria for company specific projects (other than condemned essential gas appliance repair and replacement)</b>	
In order to qualify as a VCMA project, a project must:	
<b>VCMA Eligibility Criteria</b>	<b>Criteria Satisfied (Yes/No)</b>
<b>a)</b> Have a positive, or forecasted positive Social Return on Investment (SROI), including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA project;	<b>YES</b>
<b>b)</b> Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i.</b> Provide support to consumers in vulnerable situations, and relate to energy safeguarding, or</li> <li><b>ii.</b> Provide awareness on the dangers of CO, or</li> <li><b>iii.</b> Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO;</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b>
<b>c)</b> Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these;	<b>YES</b>
<b>d)</b> Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through license obligations; and	<b>YES</b>
<b>Section 2 - Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing, repair and replacement projects</b>	
In order to qualify as a VCMA project, unsafe pipework and essential gas appliance servicing, repair or replacement must meet the following criteria:	
<b>a)</b> A GDN has to isolate and condemn unsafe pipework or an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role;	<b>YES</b>
<b>b)</b> The household cannot afford to service, repair or replace the unsafe pipework or essential gas appliance; and;	<b>YES</b>
<b>c)</b> Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including national, devolved or local government funding) to fund the unsafe pipework or essential gas appliance servicing, repair or replacement.	<b>YES</b>
<b>Section 3 - Eligibility criteria for collaborative VCMA projects</b>	
In order to qualify as a collaborative VCMA project, a project must:	
<b>a)</b> Meet the above company specific and boiler repair and replace (if applicable) project eligibility criteria;	<b>N/A</b>
<b>b)</b> Have the potential to benefit consumers on the participating networks; and	<b>YES</b>
<b>c)</b> Involve two, or more, gas distribution companies.	<b>YES</b>

Gas Network Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - Project Registration Table 2

<b>Information Required</b>	<b>Description</b>																				
<b>Project Title</b>	Services Beyond the Meter																				
<b>Funding GDN(s)</b>	Cadent Gas and Northern Gas Networks (NGN)																				
<b>Role of GDN(s) *For Collaborative VCMA Projects only</b>	Cadent Gas – Project Lead  Northern gas networks (NGN)																				
<b>Date of PEA Submission</b>	January 2024																				
<b>VCMA Project Contact Name, email, and Number</b>	Earl Richards  earl.richards@cadentgas.com																				
<b>Total Cost (£k)</b>	<p><b>Year 3</b></p> <p><b>Cadent Gas Limited</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Cost Item</th> <th>Forecast cost</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Operating model</b> - Delivery</td> <td>£1,024,400.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Training</b> - Re assessment - New Trainees</td> <td>£129,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Equipment</b> - Recalibration - New tooling</td> <td>£210,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Materials</b> - Appliances - Consumables</td> <td>£276,600.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Cadent Gas Total</b></td> <td><b>£1,640,000.00</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Northern Gas Network</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Cost Item</th> <th>Forecast Cost</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Budget</b></td> <td>£67,701.12</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Estimated Cost</b> - Engineer time - Materials - Engineer Expenses</td> <td>£36,000.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Northern Gas Network Total</b></td> <td><b>£36,000.00</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>There will be additional costings post April 2024 for NGN</p>	Cost Item	Forecast cost	<b>Operating model</b> - Delivery	£1,024,400.00	<b>Training</b> - Re assessment - New Trainees	£129,000.00	<b>Equipment</b> - Recalibration - New tooling	£210,000.00	<b>Materials</b> - Appliances - Consumables	£276,600.00	<b>Cadent Gas Total</b>	<b>£1,640,000.00</b>	Cost Item	Forecast Cost	<b>Budget</b>	£67,701.12	<b>Estimated Cost</b> - Engineer time - Materials - Engineer Expenses	£36,000.00	<b>Northern Gas Network Total</b>	<b>£36,000.00</b>
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<b>Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)</b>	£1,676,000.00
<b>Problem(s)</b>	<p>Our emergency engineers enter thousands of homes across our networks each year, attending many customer reported gas or carbon monoxide (CO) emergencies. Our primary focus when completing this work is to safeguard life and property.</p> <p>During these emergencies, our engineers and staff often encounter a significant number of customers in vulnerable situations who may lack the resources to maintain safe gas appliances.</p> <p>In situations where we've addressed a gas emergency, it might be necessary to isolate the gas supply, rendering the appliances inoperable. This can leave the customer without essential services like heating, hot water, and cooking facilities, and potentially heightening their vulnerability.</p> <p>We understand the potential risks associated with leaving customers without gas, and our engineers strive to deliver an excellent customer experience beyond solely ensuring the gas network's safety, a primary role outlined in our license conditions. However, our focus on safety might inadvertently leave some customers vulnerable.</p> <p>When dealing with reports of CO, and gas emergencies, safety measures sometimes require us to isolate the supply if we can't confirm the safety of appliances. This decision might stem from various factors, such as a faulty alarm or misuse of an appliance. Consequently, customers might need to engage a Gas Safe engineer to verify the safety of their appliances, which can pose financial and logistical challenges.</p>
<b>Scope and Objectives</b>	<p>The whole concept of the Services Beyond the Meter (SBtM) programme is to offer customers in vulnerable situations a way to keep themselves safe, warm, and independent in their own home giving them access to support that wasn't previously there.</p> <p>Where we have attended a natural gas or CO emergency and isolated the gas supply, we now have the means to return and test the appliances to confirm safe operation and ultimately, restore the gas supply to the customer's property either by repair or replacement on the installation.</p> <p>The journey below illustrates the customer experience:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emergency call received from the customer to the call centre.</li> <li>2. An emergency engineer attends site to safeguard life and property and removes the risk by isolating the gas supply.</li> <li>3. The engineer recognizes signs of vulnerability on site after seeing various signs or picking up on this from discussions with the customer.</li> <li>4. The engineer then offers the customer the choice of an upskilled engineer to attend their property to test the appliances for safety or to make a repair or undertake a replacement on the installation.</li> <li>5. An appointment is booked in with the customer usually within 24hrs of the emergency call.</li> <li>6. The upskilled engineer attends the customer property and works on the customers gas installation and appliances.</li> <li>7. The gas installation and appliances are tested and confirmed safe either by repair or replacement.</li> <li>8. The gas supply and appliances are re-instated leaving the customer on supply and safe.</li> </ol> <p>The expansion of referral routes extends to various avenues, including the partnership with Cadent centres for warmth, the collaboration with Harvey Girls, Blackpool coastal housing and engagement within Cadent's mains replacement program.</p> <p>Should an unsafe issue arise with either the installation or appliance, we have the capacity to isolate that specific appliance. Subsequently, we'll refer the matter to our charity partners to conduct eligibility checks and undertake any necessary additional work.</p>

- Repair / replacement of installation pipework.
- Repair / replacement appliance.
- Servicing of an appliance

Furthermore, we aim to maximise the utilisation of our engineers by having them undertake these tasks once our charity partners have verified the eligibility.

- Expand work across all the Cadent networks EM, EA, WM, NW & NL.
- Upskill additional resources where required to complete SBtM work types.
- Employ regional network leads to supervise SBtM work types across the EM, EA, WM, NW & NL.
- Employ a Regional Manager and Technical Specialist
- Embed SBtM into core Cadent infrastructure systems.
- Provide the engineers with energy advice training to directly deliver in the homes with the customers.
- Continue to prove the value in delivering these work type at local and national levels.

**Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA**

This project directly addresses the daily challenges faced by customers in vulnerable situations, especially considering the prevailing cost of living and energy crisis experienced nationwide in the UK. It is a pivotal part of our efforts aimed at supporting customers living in fuel poverty, ensuring their safety, warmth, and independence within their homes.

After a comprehensive assessment of the project's eligibility against the VCMA governance criteria, it has successfully met all outlined requirements. The project's scope exceeds what we typically classify as routine business operations, demonstrating our commitment to pushing boundaries in supporting the most vulnerable customers within a GDN's purview.

In the event of one of our engineers responding to an emergency report of CO the standard procedure involves disconnecting the customer's supply, aligning with our license conditions. This action results in isolating the supply at the meter outlet, leaving the customer without heating, hot water, and potentially cooking facilities.

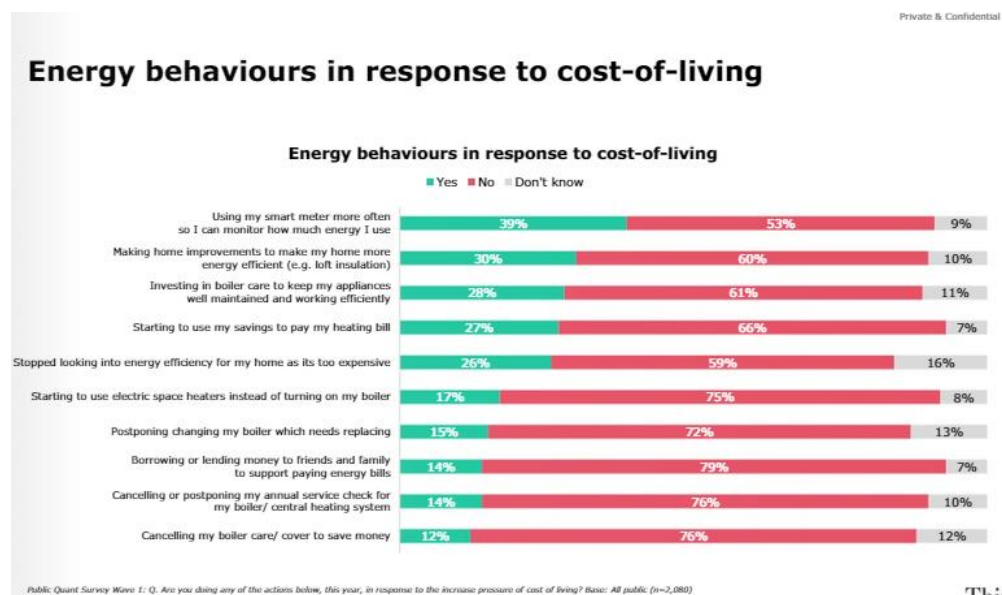
Such a situation leaves the customer extremely vulnerable with limited recourse, potentially leading to other safety issues, including:

- The customer reconnecting the gas supply (self-reconnection)
- The customer continuing to live without heating or hot water due to affordability issues.
- The customer hiring unlicensed contractors.
- The customer resorting to payday loans to cover repair expenses.

**Evidence of Stakeholder/Customer Support**

We have conducted extensive stakeholder and customer feedback to hone and shape our strategy for supporting customers living in vulnerable situations in RIIO-GD2.

**Energy Diaries: Fair Sustainability (Sept 23)**



- Postponing changing my boiler which needs replacing (15%)
- Cancelling or postponing my annual service check for my boiler/ central heating system (14%)

There is recognition that energy companies have the expertise and a responsibility to help:

- 79% agree that energy companies have the resources and expertise to take the lead in creating a more sustainable UK.
- 72% agree energy companies have a particular responsibility for helping the most vulnerable in our society to be more sustainable.
- Overall, customers feel positive towards initiatives to support vulnerable customers. In response to examples, customers feel that Cadent is working hard towards supporting vulnerable customers. Centers for Warmth and Beyond the Meter initiatives are meaningful and a vital safety net for vulnerable customers.
- However, more can be done to expand these services beyond the most vulnerable, particularly Beyond the Meter (PSR), due to the risk of gas leaks and being left without power.

“[Beyond the Meter] I have experience of this, so I know they try really hard with this. This seems like a useful service. I got my mum put on the list. A little bit of care for you as a customer can make all the difference.” 55+, homeowner.

#### **Key Stakeholders engaged for this project:**

Gas Safe Register | Head of Stakeholder & Large Business Relationships

“This is a great idea as there is circa 140,000 registered engineers on the Gas Safe Register yet there are only circa 2,000 of them that carry the CMDDA1 qualification. Having the ESP (emergency service providers) engineers being able to react to this work, it will be a great outcome for consumers in vulnerable situations where a trusted competent engineer can deem what remedial work, if any, is required”.

#### **HSE | Downstream Senior Gas Investigation Policy Officer**

“This is great area of work to explore to reduce the impacts of CO on Gas consumers. If Cadent engineers can carry out this work, then why wouldn't they as they're the first responders on site”.

#### **NEA – National Energy Action | Project Management & Policy Team**

“This is potentially a great lifeline for the people who wouldn't be able to afford a Gas Safe Registered engineer to reinstate their supply after an investigation has taken place. Nor would these consumers have an engineer to call in the first place. Using 7 your existing workforce to help the people who need it the most can only result in a positive outcome for all involved”.

#### **Citizens Advice | Customer Engagement Team**

“You can provide a better service for your customers who would usually be left without Gas. Providing this service to your customers in vulnerable situations is really showing that Cadent are focusing more on their customers than ever before. We would like to see this happen”.

#### **Customer and stakeholder insight / feedback around CO**

Stakeholders recognise the value of Cadent's work on CO and want to see networks adopt innovative new approaches to eradicate the dangers E.g., targeting dangerous appliances, repairing / replacing where appropriate.

#### **Strategy / policy**

“Ofgem / Industry bodies want to see networks go above and beyond the minimum level of service and deliver services with a strong social return on investment to protect the most vulnerable.

#### **Customers in vulnerable situations workshop**

During NGN's November 2021 Energy Crisis / Partnership Working Workshop, stakeholders said the energy crisis will result in people not getting their appliances serviced every year, which increases the risks of CO poisoning.

#### **NGN CO Research August 2022**

Customer self-rating of CO awareness, captured during the recent CO research project 2022 In 2022, around 6 in 10 customers felt they have good awareness of Carbon Monoxide (CO). This was significantly higher than last wave in 2020. Older customers,

especially those retired, as well as males have higher levels of claimed CO awareness when compared to those younger or females. Customers in Bradford recorded lower awareness than East Riding and Wear. Homeowners are more likely to have better awareness of CO than those who rent or live in shared accommodation. Overall, Cadent and NGN have both received strong stakeholder and customer support to justify their investment of VCMA funding into this collaborative project.

**Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria**

Our goal is to restore our customers' gas supply promptly after ensuring safety in compliance with our current licensing obligations, particularly following instances of CO alarm activation, suspected fumes, gas leaks, or faults in the customer's installation.

This restoration is targeted to occur either on the same day, the following working day, or on a date convenient for the customer. Our success lies in reinstating the gas supply within a working day, preventing the customer from being in a vulnerable situation due to an isolated gas supply or the temptation of self-reconnection.

Furthermore, we commit to providing customers who lack a CO alarm or need a replacement with a new one. Our objective is to enhance their knowledge regarding Gas safety, risks associated with CO, the benefits of being on the Priority Service Register (PSR), and offer personalised, in-home energy advice. This guidance aims to help the customer optimise the efficiency of their heating system for better energy management.

**Cadent Services Beyond the Meter Delivery forecast**

01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024	
Co investigations completed	1,800
Cooker repair / replacements	150
Appliance Safety check's	120
Pipework repairs / replacement's	50
Energy Advice – Heating & Hot Water Controls	1,900
Energy Advice – Efficient use of appliances & behaviours	1,900
CO Alarm installation	1,800
Co Advice	1,900
Boiler replacement's	20

**Cadent Services Beyond the Meter Gross SROI Forecast from above completions.**

01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024	
Co investigations completed	£1,522,800.00
Cooker repair / replacements	£70,350.00
Appliance Safety check's	£56,280.00
Pipework repairs / replacement's	TBC*
Energy Advice – Heating & Hot Water Controls	£631,427.00
Energy Advice – Efficient use of appliances & behaviours	£698,763.00
CO Alarm installation	£19,638.00
Co Advice	£16,587.00

Boiler replacement's	£130,259.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,146,104.60</b>
<i>* We are currently calculating the SROI for Pipework repairs / replacements.</i>	

**NGN Services Beyond the Meter Delivery forecast**

<b>01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024</b>	
Co investigations completed	45

**NGN Services Beyond the Meter Gross SROI Forecast from above completions.**

<b>01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024</b>	
Co investigations completed	£38,070.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£38,070.00</b>

Under normal business as usual (BAU) activities all these jobs would have been left isolated at the meter outlet leaving the customer off supply.

Our goal is to ensure that every customer we visit through SBtM activities experiences an improved situation because of our visit.

**Project Partners and Third Parties Involved**

Cadent SBtM will work in partnership with:

- Northern Gas Network
- National Energy Action
- Groundworks
- Harvey Girls
- Blackpool coastal housing
- Universal Gas solutions Ltd
- AllGas1 Ltd
- Fusion Gas Ltd

**Potential for New Learning**

Areas for potential growth and learning within Cadent Gas SBtM involve several significant aspects:

1. Proving the potential for GDNs to expand support beyond the Gas meter, specifically to assist vulnerable customers, thus broadening the range of aid offered.
2. Utilising lessons and successes from this project to replicate effective strategies within our operational processes and potentially extend these practices to benefit the wider industry.
3. Strengthening our engineers' training to effectively identify appliances at higher risk of CO emissions, fostering a more proactive approach to mitigating these risks.
4. Identifying the most common appliances in vulnerable customers' homes that may pose CO risks, enabling us to take proactive measures when encountering similar appliances elsewhere.
5. Improving our workforce's skills to better recognise and respond to customer vulnerabilities, ensuring a more personalised and empathetic service delivery.
6. Equipping our workforce with versatile capabilities to handle appliances across various processes, aligning our capacities with the evolving landscape of the energy transition.

These initiatives underscore our commitment to a proactive and adaptable service delivery approach, keeping us at the forefront of the energy industry's ongoing advancements.



**Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations**

**Scope**

Throughout 2023, our dedication to expanding and fortifying SBtM operations has been relentless. This effort ensures our capability to execute all work types across our network's footprint. Each area manager now oversees approximately ten upskilled engineers, empowered to handle SBtM activities in their respective areas. Additionally, local delivery partners within each network bolster resilience during winter.

Each network has a dedicated lead, responsible and accountable for all SBtM work types, ensuring continued compliance.

To date, we've trained and assessed approximately 90 Engineers for Cadent Gas.

While a significant focus lies on Carbon Monoxide/Dioxide Atmosphere testing, our scope extends to diverse tasks like proactive Gas safety checks, appliance servicing, repairs, replacements, and pipework trace and repair. These endeavours specifically target our society's most vulnerable customers, referred through partnerships with local charities.

**Year 3**

**Cadent (01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024)**

Work Type	Completed	SROI Per Job	Total
Co investigations	1,800	£846.00	£1,522,800.00
Cooker repair / replacements	150	£469.00	£70,350.00
Appliance Safety check's	120	£469.00	£56,280.00
Pipework repairs / replacement's	50	TBC*	TBC*
Energy Advice – Heating & Hot Water Controls	1,900	£332.33	£631,427.00
Energy Advice – Efficient use of appliances & behaviours	1,900	£367.77	£698,763.00
CO Alarm installation	1,800	£10.91	£19,638.00
Co Advice	1,900	£8.73	£16,587.00
Boiler replacement's	20	£6,512.98	£130,259.60
<b>Total</b>			<b>£3,146,104.60</b>
<i>* We are currently calculating the SROI for Pipework repairs / replacements.</i>			

**NGN (01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024)**

Work Type	Completed	SROI Per Job	Total
Co investigations	45	£846.00	£38,070.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>£38,070.00</b>

**VCMA Project Start and End Date**

Start date: 01<sup>st</sup> April 2023  
End date: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

**Geographical Area**

Across all Cadent networks and NGN.

**Gas Network Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Governance Document - PEA Control Table**

In order to ensure that a VCMA project is registered in accordance with the Ofgem VCMA governance document (incl. project eligibility assessment), the below table should be completed as part of the project registration process.

Stage 1: GDN Collaboration Group PEA Review Date completed: 14/12/2023.  
 Review completed by: Earl Richards  
 Job title: Regional Technical Manager

GDN:	Name(s):
Cadent	Earl Richards
NGN	Signed version to be published post April 24

Stage 2: GD2CVG Panel Review completed: 24/03/2024  
 Review completed by: Gurvinder Dosanjh  
 Job title: Social programmes Manager

GDN:	Name(s):
Cadent	Gurvinder Dosanjh
NGN	Signed version to be published post April 24

Step 3: Participating GDN individual signatory sign-off

GDN	Name(s)	Signature(s)	Date
Cadent:	Phil Burrows	<i>Philip Burrows</i>	24/03/2024
NGN:	Signed version to be published post April 24		

Step 4: Upload PEA Document to the Website & Notification Email Sent to Ofgem (vcma@ofgem.gov.uk)

Date that PEA Document Uploaded to the Website: March 2024

Date that Notification Email Sent to Ofgem: March 2024

