Cadent
Your Gas Network

Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

Disablement Association of Barking & Dagenham (DABD) - Centre for Warmth

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Updated December 2024 (Lucy Nembaware)
Updated November 2025 (Lucy Nembaware)

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

Section 1 - Eligibility criteria for company specific projects (other than condemned essential gas appliance repair and replacement) In order to qualify as a VCMA project, a project must:	
VCMA Eligibility Criteria	**Criteria Satisfied (Yes/No)**
a) Have a positive, or forecasted positive Social Return on Investment (SROI), including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA project;	**Yes**
b) Either: **i.** Provide support to consumers in vulnerable situations, and relate to energy safeguarding, or **ii.** Provide awareness on the dangers of CO, or **iii.** Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO;	**Yes**
c) Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these;	**Yes**
d) Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations; and	**Yes**
e) Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding.	**Yes**
Section 2 - Eligibility criteria for company specific essential gas appliance servicing, repair and replacement projects In order to qualify as a VCMA project, unsafe pipework and essential gas appliance servicing, repair or replacement must meet the following criteria:	
a) 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;	**N/A**
b) The household cannot afford to service, repair or replace the unsafe pipework or essential gas appliance; and;	**N/A**
c) 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.	**N/A**

Section 3 - Eligibility criteria for collaborative VCMA projects In order to qualify as a collaborative VCMA project, a project must:	
a) Meet the above company specific and boiler repair and replace (if applicable) project eligibility criteria;	**N/A**
b) Have the potential to benefit consumers on the participating networks; and	**N/A**
c) Involve two, or more, gas distribution companies.	**N/A**

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

Information Required	Description
Project Title	Disablement Association of Barking & Dagenham - Centre for Warmth
Funding GDN(s)	Cadent Specific
New / Updated	Updated
Role of GDN(s) ***For Collaborative VCMA Projects only**	Not applicable - Cadent company-specific project
Date of PEA Submission	November 2023 **Updated version submission: December 2024** **Updated version submission: November 2025**
VCMA Project Contact Name, email and Number	Name: Phil Burrows Title: Head of Customer Vulnerability Social Programme Delivery Email: Phil.m.burrows@cadentgas.com Phone: 07773 545451
Total Cost (£k)	Project Cost: £240,000.00 Project management cost: £9,600.00 **<u>Updated December 2024 - additional costs</u>** Large slow cookers: 150 x £27.84 = £4,176.00 Project Management cost (4%) = £167.04 **<u>Updated November 2025 - additional costs</u>** Centre costs: £40,577.00 Slow cookers: £1,392.00 Leaflets: £881.82 Project Management cost: £1,714.03 Total: £44,564.85
Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)	£249,600.00 **<u>Updated December 2024</u>** £253,943.04 **<u>Updated November 2025</u>** £298,507.89
Problem(s)	Deprivation varies across London, but when mapped, East London has one of the highest concentrations of areas that are deprived [1]. This includes the London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge, areas within Havering such as Romford Town, and

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019

	neighbourhoods within neighbouring Essex[2]. As a result, many residents are being negatively affected by the cost-of-living crisis and are being pushed further into fuel poverty – having to increasingly seek support and advice. Disabled people are also disproportionately being affected [3]. Being in fuel poverty means that these residents are more susceptible to CO (and other gas safety risks), being in debt, and various physical and mental health-related issues. There is an increasing demand for a local holistic support service, and also a gap in bespoke support service for vulnerable residents who are disabled or otherwise housebound. DABD has over 60 years of experience in developing and providing a range of services to East London residents – from financial to food support, warm spaces, and energy efficiency advice. They also have expertise in working with vulnerable and disabled residents, helping to support independent living, inclusion, and personal development. Cadent's VCMA funding will enable DABD to develop and expand its services and provisions, working from the proposed Centre for Warmth and providing a 'drop-in' surgery type service, scheduled appointments, remote telephony and bespoke home visits to support residents in need within the London Boroughs of Havering, Redbridge, Barking & Dagenham and neighbouring Essex. **Updated November 2025** While inflation is stabilising, many residents in the boroughs where DABD operates remain vulnerable to fuel poverty and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. DABD states that "Cadent's mission here is to provide services for all, recognising the specific circumstances of each customer individually and tailoring services to meet their needs, whilst also maintaining a deep understanding of those customers. And whilst statistics are challenging, we know that as a special educational needs & disability (SEND) focussed, community-based charity, (who already partner with Cadent), we are ideally placed to connect with and support those vulnerable people now and in the future." Due to Cadent's investment, the partnership project has already resulted in meaningful outputs across the communities DABD operates in, offering vital support on CO safety, energy efficiency, income maximisation, and the PSR. Cadent's sustained support is essential for strengthening residents' ability to navigate ongoing challenges. Therefore, continued funding from Cadent is vital to safeguard core expertise, sustain key services, and preserve local relationships and trust.
Scope and Objectives	Cadent will supply DABD with £249,600.00 of VCMA funding to deliver a 2-year project.

[2] https://trustforlondon.org.uk/data/index-multiple-deprivation-2019-rebased-london/?_ga=2.86468888.1421740986.1703087670-1065939746.1703087670

[3] https://www.sense.org.uk/about-us/statistics/complex-disabilities-cost-of-living-sense-natcen-research-briefing/

	This funding will be used to deliver the following: • Individuals will receive advice on income maximisation and help with benefits. • Individuals will receive advice on energy efficiency. • They will deliver advice on CO awareness. • Vulnerable people will receive a free CO alarm. • Individuals will be given advice on the PSR. • Individuals will be assisted to register for the PSR. • The above sessions will alleviate loneliness and isolation by offering groups/activities. This project aims to reach approximately 3,805 people over a 2-year period. This will be divided as follows: • 650 people will receive advice on benefits /income maximisation. • 885 people will receive advice on energy efficiency. • 750 people will receive advice on Carbon monoxide awareness. • 785 people will be given advice on the PSR. • 78 people will be assisted to sign up to the PSR. • 3,805 people will alleviate loneliness and isolation by attending sessions and groups. **Updated December 2024** DABD has presented that there are individuals in the communities that they support who would benefit from receiving slow-cooking advice and a free slow cooker. Many individuals fit within the criteria of individuals who would most benefit from the service and resource. Therefore, in addition to the above scope and objectives, 150 individuals without a slow cooker will receive one for free and will receive slow cooking advice. The purpose will be to teach them how to cook healthy, affordable and energy-efficient meals via slow cooker education sessions. **Updated November 2025** Cadent will provide DABD with an additional £44,564.85 for a five-month project extension. The funding will enable DABD to deliver the additional services outlined below, building on the proven delivery methods established over the past two years while applying key lessons learned. For example, integrating outreach support into project delivery has proven highly successful. Project Objectives The success of the extension will be measured against achieving the objectives below: • Provide 581 individuals with PSR advice via one-to-one or group conversations. • Sign a minimum of 100 individuals onto the PSR. • Provide energy efficiency advice to 611 individuals via one-to-one or group conversations. • Support 150 individuals with income maximisation advice.

	• Provide 600 individuals with CO awareness advice via one-to-one or group conversations. • Provide 150 “at-risk” individuals with a free CO alarm. • Provide 50 individuals with a free slow cooker and highlight the energy efficiency and nutritional benefits of slow cooking. • An average of 300 individuals will attend the centre and have access to loneliness and isolation support. Then, the overall success of the project will be measured against achieving the objectives below. Note: the figures are based on the actual reach achieved by the project to date via one-to-one and group conversations, plus the additional reach expected to be achieved during the extension. • 2,903 individuals will receive PSR advice via one-to-one or group conversations. • A minimum of 642 individuals will be signed onto the PSR. • 3,532 individuals will receive energy efficiency advice via one-to-one or group conversations. • 612 individuals with receive income maximisation advice and support. • 2,918 individuals will receive CO awareness advice via one-to-one, or group conversations and “at-risk” individuals will receive a free CO alarm. • 200 individuals will be provided with a free slow cooker and receive information about the energy efficiency and nutritional benefits of slow cooking. • An average of 899 individuals will attend the centre and have access to loneliness and isolation support.
Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA	Cadent believe that this project meets all the required VCMA eligibility criteria. A. The project is forecasted to have a positive SROI. Please see the relevant section for more information. We believe this project has the deliverables necessary to create a positive social return on investment - see the below section for more details. B. The project will either: i. Provide support to consumers in vulnerable situations, and relate to energy safeguarding, or ii. Provide awareness on the dangers of CO, or iii. Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO. The project will provide support to customers living in vulnerable situations through energy efficiency advice/income maximisation. The project will also offer customers education on the dangers of. CO and issue audible alarms to particularly at-risk households. Finally, the project will reduce the risk of harm caused by CO through offering free safety checks on unsafe appliances that have not been historically serviced by a gas safe registered engineer. C. The project has defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve them. This project has clearly defined outcomes and associated outcomes, the meeting of which will quantify success. Further information on the project's outcomes and

	associated actions can be found in the relevant section below. D. The project goes beyond the activities funded through other price control mechanisms or required by licence obligations. The method in which energy efficiency, gas safety and income maximisation advice is issued to families on this project is innovative and goes beyond BAU. Additionally, the offer of a free gas appliance safety check conducted by an upskilled Cadent engineer is a first for the VCMA and business as a whole. E. Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved, or local) funding. This project will be delivered solely through Cadent's VCMA funding.
Evidence of Stakeholder/Customer Support	Cadent conducted extensive stakeholder and customer engagement to obtain feedback on its RIIO-GD2 business plans and subsequent Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) delivery. Firstly, we conducted "Energy Diaries", a piece of research aimed at gauging the customer's attitudes towards the rises in energy prices, as well as the support offered by organisations such as Cadent. The Energy Diaries demonstrated that customers continue to support the key measures that we identified when developing our RIIO-2 plan, with a heightened requirement to support people with the cost-of-living crisis. The Centre for Warmth - DABD partnership recognises this feedback by offering vulnerable households essential support with income maximisation and energy efficiency services. Secondly, we regularly seek to obtain the feedback of stakeholders such as Citizens Advice and National Energy Action (NEA) to understand the needs of customers in vulnerable situations. These regular conversations allow Cadent to gain feedback on the initiatives we are or should be supporting and ensure that the projects are in the best interests of our customers. Stakeholders have provided consistent feedback on the need for energy networks to focus their funding on supporting households most impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. This project takes this feedback into account by creating a partnership with a trusted local charity, positioned in an area with levels of deprivation and fuel poverty significantly higher than the national average. Finally, Cadent asked customers for their views on which of the below statements best described their health and financial situation compared to 2021: • My current household’s health or financial situation is worse off compared to 2021. My current household’s health or financial situation is the same compared to 2021. • My current household’s health or financial situation is better off compared to 2021.

	60% of participants responded that their households' health or financial situation was worse off this year compared to 2021 levels. This project aims to support households most impacted by a downturn in their financial health through offering services such as income maximisation and benefit entitlement checks. **Updated November 2025** From the outset, the Centres for Warmth project has been dedicated to addressing fuel poverty by providing energy efficiency advice, income maximisation support, and other forms of assistance through community-based partnerships. This is part of the reason that to this day, the Centres for Warmth project continues to be advocated by many - often aligning with policy recommendations, customer perspectives and the priorities of other key stakeholders. **Havering Place based Partnership - Poverty Reduction Strategy** Havering is one of the primary locations where DABD provides support. In February 2024, the council published a report which focuses on poverty reduction, including fuel poverty. Some of the recommendations include: • Shift power to people and communities with experience of poverty. • Redesign services and support to make sure people get the right help at the right time. • Unlock more stable and long-term funding that incentivises collaborative and coordinated action on poverty. **House of Commons Library - Fuel Poverty** Alongside this, the House of Commons Library, Fuel Poverty report (2025)[4] highlighted: • Several stakeholders have recommended that Governments do more on fuel poverty • Many consumer groups argue that the pandemic has worsened fuel poverty and more needs to be done • Fuel poverty spans energy, income, housing, and health policies • A need to harness and empower of trusted intermediaries and independent advice providers to support clarity around information The points stated closely reflect the core objectives that the Centres for Warmth project seeks to achieve and continue to hold relevance.
Information Required	**Description**
Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria	Project Outcomes The VCMA project will be delivered in partnership with DABD and aims to support approximately 3,805 people with home energy, income, and CO advice over the 2-year project.

[4] CBP-8730.pdf

	The Centre for Warmth project aims to achieve the following outcomes: • Provide people with advice on income maximisation and benefit entitlement. • Provide people with advice on energy efficiency. • Provide people with advice on Carbon Monoxide safety. • Provide people with advice on the PSR. • Help people alleviate loneliness and isolation by providing a safe place for them to meet and interact. <u>Associated Actions</u> Cadent's funding will be used to: • Employ 1.5 full and part-time staff to offer advice on energy efficiency, CO, and the PSR. • Keep the centre running by assisting with running costs for time spent on the project. • Cover the cost of promoting the project. • Host sessions on CO awareness. • Host sessions on the PSR. <u>Success Criteria</u> The success of the project will be evaluated against the meeting of the project's objectives through offering scheduled appointments, home visits, walk-ins, and telephone appointments. These objectives include: 1. The project will reach 3,805 people across the course of the 2-year contract. 2. 750 people will receive in-depth 1-2-1 advice on income maximisation. 3. 885 people will receive energy efficiency advice. 4. 750 people will receive advice on CO. 5. 78 people will receive support to sign up for the PSR. 6. 785 people will receive advice on the PSR. 7. 3,805 people will attend the sessions to help alleviate loneliness and isolation. <u>Updated December 2024</u> 150 individuals without a slow cooker will receive a free slow cooker and slow cooking advice. To facilitate this, Cadent will provide DABD with free slow cookers and DABD will deliver the education aspect. **<u>Updated November 2025</u>** This extension draws directly on two years of delivery experience. DABD has undertaken a thorough review of the successes, challenges, and areas for improvement to implement and avoid within the shorter five-month period. Continued funding will enable DABD to consolidate proven approaches and access the resources required to maximise the project outcomes. <u>Associated Actions</u> Cadent will continue to provide the funding, resources and training required to support DABD for an additional five-

	months. This will ensure the successful continuation of the Centres for Warmth project, while the delivery team also carry forward essential best practise and learning. <u>Success Criteria</u> With the additional funding and project extension, the overall success of the project will be measured against DABD achieving the criteria below: • 2,903 individuals will receive PSR advice via one-to-one or group conversations. • A minimum of 642 individuals will be signed onto the PSR. • 3,532 individuals will receive energy efficiency advice via one-to-one or group conversations. • 612 individuals with receive income maximisation advice and support. • 2,918 individuals will receive CO awareness advice via one-to-one, or group conversations and "at-risk" individuals will receive a free CO alarm. • 200 individuals will be provided with a free slow cooker and receive information about the energy efficiency and nutritional benefits of slow cooking. • An average of 899 individuals will attend the centre and have access to loneliness and isolation support.
Project Partners and Third Parties Involved	Cadent and Disablement Association of Barking and Dagenham
Potential for New Learning	Over the last 18 months of our Centres of Warmth, Cadent have seen first-hand how vital the community centres are to the communities they serve. These centres pick up services that are no longer available or are at saturation point. CAB is so busy they refer to the Centre for Warmth advisors. Many organisations refer to these centres for food, housing, general advice, and support. These centres are safe spaces for many customers living in vulnerable situations and are the hub of community life. The staff are trusted members of the community and can get to the root cause of their issues to offer a wraparound service. Friendships are forged and confidence is built in this environment as everyone is treated the same, and no judgment or inequality exists. These centres are lifelines to many of our customers, and we will continue to listen and learn from our partnerships. **<u>Updated November 2025</u>** The centres are facing ongoing pressure to meet rising demands across diverse community needs, particularly as local authority resources continue to diminish. By recognising and responding to the evolving needs of different communities, Cadent can identify the most effective ways to help residents overcome socioeconomic challenges while also fostering valuable cross-network learning. Where possible, Cadent will maintain close collaboration with partners to enhance the support and services offered to vulnerable customers. This approach builds on the extension

	model, where funding has been made more flexible to better reflect the specific requirements of each centre.
Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations	The DABD - Centre for Warmth will deliver support for a 2-year duration. The project will focus on the provision of advice to approximately 3,805 customers. **SROI calculations:** | Initiative	Quantity of Customers Support	Total SROI for 5 years
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Income Maximisation Services	750	£1,287,832.50
Efficient Use of Appliances & Behaviours	885	£325,476.45
Priority Services Register	75	£10,791.75
CO Education	750	£6,547.50
Lonliness and Isolation	438.00	£525,600.00
Totals		£2,156,248.20 | |	
Total Investment (5 year):	£249,600.00
Investment 1 year costs:	£124,800.00 | | **SROI Calculations:**	
5 year Gross:	£2,156,248.20
1 year Gross	£588,929.64
5 year Net:	£1,906,648.20
1 year Net:	£464,129.64 | SROI Ratio = £1:8 <u>Supporting households to maximise their income.</u> Cadent worked with SIA Partners to evaluate the average 5-year gross present value of supporting households to maximise their income. SIA Partner's based their analysis on the "actual" data from a 3-month project between Cadent and NEA, and historic data from NEA over the past 3 years. They calculated an average 5-year gross present value of supporting households to maximise their income of £1,717.11. <u>Educating customers on the dangers of carbon monoxide</u> Cadent also employed SIA Partners to evaluate the forecasted social return on investment of several RIIO-GD2 business plan elements. These elements included CO education, CO alarm distribution and the repair/replacement of gas appliances. They pointed to several factors that influenced the social value generated by educating customers on the dangers of carbon monoxide: • A reduction in A&E visits linked to CO. • A reduction in long term hospitalisations linked to CO. • A reduction in deaths caused by CO. • A reduction in time of work due to injury caused by CO.

	• A reduction in ambulance call outs linked to CO. SIA Partners calculated the average 5-year gross present value of a CO educational conversation to be £8.73 - this is based on a 1-2-1 conversation with an 80% retention rate. <u>Supporting households to register to the Priority Services Register</u> Cadent worked with SIA Partners to evaluate the average 5-year gross present value of supporting households to register to the PSR. SIA Partner's based their analysis on the DNO proxy bank value for an avoided stress management course. They evaluated an average 5-year gross present value of £143.89 for a single PSR registration. <u>The Cost of loneliness</u> The Centre for Warmth project will reach customers living in urban areas of Cadent's network. BBC report found that 46% of England's urban population are aged 65 or over. [5]One-fourth of the population aged 65 years and older reported feelings of loneliness. [6]Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology reported a net present value of £6,000 for people who reported being lonely most of the time. This figure was across a 10-year period and equates to £600 per annum. This research concluded that older people who feel lonely are at greater risk of developing conditions such as dementia and depression. The health foundation reported that 21% of older people who live alone, or face feelings of loneliness visit their GP at least once a month. This places pressure on front-line services since many people who experience loneliness think of their GP as someone they can relate to and who will listen to them, engaging in an open, friendly dialogue. 46% of which will be aged 65 and over. [7]Campaign to end loneliness reported that over 700,000 people aged 65 and over are experiencing feelings of loneliness. 46% of this age group lives in urban areas which equates to 322,000 people. Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology research suggest a potential saving of £600 per annum for each older customer supported that was previously experiencing feelings of loneliness.

[5] https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html#:~:text=Older%20adults%20are%20at%20increased,the%20amount%20of%20social%20contact.
[6] https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s00127-019-01733-7.pdf
[7] https://campaigntoendloneliness.org/guidance/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/StatisticsGFLA.pdf

	The Centre for Warmth project will run for 2 years, equating to a saving of £1,200 per customer. This equates to an overall benefit of £55,200 for 2x year only as the risk of experiencing loneliness and isolation can increase again after the project stops delivering support. 1. 3,805 people using centre. 2. 46% of the population are over 65 = 1,750.3 people 3. 25% of 1,750.3 people are lonely with health conditions = 437.58 people 438 people x £1200 (£600 per annum) = £525,09 **<u>Updated December 2024</u>** The DABD - Centre for Warmth will deliver support for a 2-year duration and Cadent will invest £253,943.04 of VCMA funding. The project will focus on the provision of advice to approximately 3,805 individuals. All factors above will remain the same except the addition of the slow cooker element of the project <u>SROI Calculations</u> • 750 individuals will receive in-depth one-to-one advice on income maximisation = £1,287,832.50 • 885 individuals will receive advice on energy efficiency = £325,476.45 • 750 individuals will receive awareness advice on CO = £6,547.50 • 75 individuals will register to the PSR = £10,791.75 • 150 individuals will receive advice on slow cooking and a free slow cooker = £35,463.00 • 438 individuals will attend the centre and be alleviated from isolation and loneliness = £525,600.00 Five-year gross present value = £2,191,711.20 One-year gross present value = £596,022.24 Five-year net present value = £1,937,768.16 One-year net present value = £469,050.72 SROI Ratio: £1:8 **<u>Updated November 2025</u>** Cadent will invest a further £44,564.85 in partnership with DABD, to support individuals in vulnerable situations for an additional five-months. Therefore, Cadent will invest £298,507.89 over the 29-month project duration. • 612 individuals will receive income maximisation advice = £1,050,871.32 • 3,532 individuals will receive energy efficiency advice = £1,298,963.64 • 2,918 individuals will receive advice on CO = £25,474.14

	• 642 individuals will be registered to the PSR = £92,377.38 • 200 individuals will attend slow cooker sessions and receive a free slow cooker = £47,284.00 • 103 individuals will be alleviated from loneliness and isolation = £149,350.00* Five-year gross present value = £2,664,320.48 One-year gross present value = £564,794.10 Five-year net present value = £2,365,812.59 One-year net present value = £439,994.10 SROI Ratio= £1:8 N.B Please note that the loneliness and isolation figure used in the original PEA is updated, ensuring a more precise reflection of the individuals supported.
VCMA Project Start and End Date	Start date: November 2023 End date: October 2025 **<u>Updated November 2025</u>** Start date: November 2025 End date: 31st March 2026
Geographical Area	The project will be delivered in Cadent's North-London Network.

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: Sustainability and Social Purpose Team PEA Peer Review	
Date Immediate Team Peer Review Completed: 23/01/2025 Updated: 09/12/2025	Review Completed By: Emma Turnbull Updated: Nicola Campbell
Stage 2: Sustainability and Social Purpose Team Management Review	
Date Management Review Completed: 23/01/2025 Date Management Review Completed: 15/12/2025	Review Completed By: Guv Dosanjh Review Completed By: Emma Turnbull
Step 3: Head of Customer Vulnerabilities Social Programmes Sign-Off: Phil Burrows	
Head of Customer Vulnerabilities Social Programmes Sign-Off Date: 25/03/2025 / 15/12/2025	
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 2025 / December 2025	

Date that Notification Email Sent to Ofgem: March 2025