

Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)

Creating Cadent Lifesavers

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April 2025



**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 a forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) and Net Present Value (NPV) including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project (GDNs should use a common SROI model.	Y
b) Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	Y
c) Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these;	Y
d) Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through license obligations; and	Y
e) Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding.	Y
Section 2 - Eligibility criteria for company-specific essential gas appliance servicing	
To qualify as a VCMA Project, essential gas appliance servicing must meet the following criteria:	
a) Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A GDN has had to isolate and condemn an essential gas appliance following a supply interruption or as part of its emergency service role; or ii. A GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in the owner-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes; or iii. A GDN or its Project Partner has identified an essential gas appliance which has not been serviced in the last 12 months in a tenant-occupied home of a customer in a Vulnerable Situation where it is the tenant's responsibility to maintain the essential gas appliance, where an occupier of the property suffers from a permanent or temporary health condition that 	N/A

makes them more vulnerable to health risks associated with cold homes.	
b) The household cannot afford to service the essential gas appliance, which is assessed against criteria consistent with the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) Guidance: Delivery document1 (see Appendix 1).	N/A
c) Sufficient funding is not available from other sources (including a social or private landlord, national, devolved, local government funding) to fund the essential gas appliance service.	N/A

Section 3 - Eligibility criteria for Collaborative VCMA Projects

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	British Heart Foundation - Creating Cadent Lifesavers
Funding GDN(s)	Cadent Ltd
New / Updated (indicate as appropriate)	New
Role of GDN(s) *For Collaborative VCMA Projects only	Cadent specific
Date of PEA Submission	April 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 Number: 07773 545451
Total Cost (£k)	Partner Costs - £333,000.00 Cadent - £13,320.00 Total Costs - £346,320.00
Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)	Total Costs - £346,320.00

<p>Problem(s)</p>	<p>As a nation, we are in the worst heart care crisis in memory, with early deaths from heart and circulatory disease hitting their highest level in more than a decade. Worse still, NHS waiting list²s for cardiac care continue to grow. For the 7.6 million people living with a heart or circulatory condition, huge backlogs mean that many of them will have limited access to the quality care and appointments they so desperately need. People are now turning to BHF more than ever before. In the face of record-high support requests to BHF’s Heart Helpline, their specialists are stretched. They’ve had to recruit temporary additional resource to stopgap the shortfall, with their own cardiac nurses working overtime to ensure vital services run smoothly. Despite an impeccable track-record of answering enquiries, high demand is upping the pressure. This year BHF have had an average of 170 calls per month where people were unable to get through when they called on their first try – this demonstrates how much the public rely on the helpline as a critical support system.</p> <p>At the same time, there are over 30,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in the UK each year. Shockingly, survival rates continue to remain low, with now less than one in ten surviving. Every minute without CPR and defibrillation reduces their chance of survival by up to 10%.</p> <p>Heart and circulatory diseases can affect everyone. But, too often, a person's risk factors are based on things entirely out of their control: where you live, your income and your background can all have a huge part to play. But, more worryingly than anything, these indicators can affect the risk of death for a person too. In England there is a nine-year life expectancy gap between people living in the most and least deprived areas (heart and circulatory diseases are the largest contributor to that gap). Health inequalities continue to drive a wedge between equal access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/news-from-the-bhf/contact-the-press-office/facts-and-figures • https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/news-from-the-bhf/news-archive/2023/june/defibs-used-in-just-10-per-cent-of-out-of-hospital-cardiac-arrests-study-shows • https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/news-from-the-bhf/news-archive/2015/october/dismal-fate-for-cardiac-arrest-victims-as-more-than-half-of-people-fail-to-act
<p>Scope and Objectives</p>	<p>BHF and Cadent are committed to supporting society’s most vulnerable members through the following initiatives:</p> <p>Enhancing Heart Health Information Accessibility</p> <p>This partnership will strengthen BHF’s dedicated Heart Helpline, offering direct access to specialist cardiac nurses for anyone impacted by heart-related conditions. The initiative seeks to empower people nationwide to prevent and manage these conditions effectively. BHF acknowledges the importance of Cadent’s Priority Services Register (PSR), which ensures that vulnerable consumers receive priority</p>

² [Early heart disease deaths rise to 14-year high - BHF](#)

	<p>responses during energy disruptions. BHF will promote this service through relevant public communications and feature information on its website; last year, these support pages received over 35 million views, demonstrating substantial reach.</p> <p>A funding requirement of £333,000 will sustain the Heart Helpline's operations for 12 months from April 2025. To maintain service delivery, eight specialist cardiac nurses, together with administrative and programme management staff, are needed each day.</p> <p>Cadent has played a significant role for more than a decade in mitigating carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, particularly among vulnerable customers. Despite longstanding efforts, understanding the true extent of CO-related incidents—including mortality rates and lost workdays—remains challenging due to fragmented responsibility across networks, suppliers, contractors, health trusts, fire services, policy bodies, and government departments. This complexity underscores the necessity of collaborative approaches.</p> <p>Research, such as Energy UK's 'CO Be Alarmed!' campaign, highlights that over 17 million people in Britain remain at risk from CO poisoning due to the absence of CO alarms in their homes, despite high reported awareness. However, surveys indicate that actual knowledge is low; for instance, in a 2020 survey of 8,000 people, 45% were unaware that CO is odorless, and only 42% possessed a working audible CO alarm. Cadent's stakeholder engagement—including workshops, focus groups, and surveys—found strong support for raising CO awareness and providing alarms, particularly for those in vulnerable circumstances. Safety of employees and the public was consistently prioritized. Scientific and medical research suggests that health may be compromised at CO exposure levels below those required to trigger alarms. Stakeholders support further development of awareness, data collection, and interventions related to CO exposure.</p> <p>All BHF Heart Helpline cardiac nurses will receive comprehensive training and resources to enhance PSR awareness, provide signposting for PSR registration, offer CO advice, and share energy efficiency guidance. Cadent will supply relevant materials during nurse onboarding and training. Where appropriate, BHF will disseminate information on these critical services and assist households in maintaining warmth and resilience within Cadent's networks.</p>
<p>Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA</p>	<p>BHF & Cadent will provide support to some of the most vulnerable in society. The project meets the VCMA eligibility criteria as it will provide vital health information, support services to educate the importance of key priorities for both parties and resources directly to the individuals and communities who need it most and who we both serve.</p> <p>Here are some of the reasons why:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know that living in a warm home is paramount to everyone's health but especially so for people suffering from heart and circulatory conditions. In cold temperatures, blood vessels of the skin narrow, so that less heat is lost. But this narrowing creates

	<p>more pressure in the rest of the circulation, meaning the heart must work harder to pump blood around the body, increasing heart rate and blood pressure. This is a normal response to the cold, but the extra strain can lead to increased symptoms for people who have a pre-existing condition. At the same time, the blood itself can become thicker and more likely to form clots – this can increase your risk of a heart attack or stroke.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heart related conditions can affect anyone, at any age – our mums, dads, grandparents, siblings, and closest friends. Two of the most reported needs of patients after diagnosis are additional information and emotional support. By funding the BHF Heart Helpline, we will be there to support everyone affected by heart and circulatory diseases, giving people more confidence in managing their conditions and, as a result, reducing isolation.
<p>Evidence of Stakeholder/Customer Support</p>	<p>A BHF and Cadent collaboration will keep the gas flowing and the blood pumping for millions of people who might find themselves vulnerable up and down the country – with Cadent by their side, BHF know we'll collectively keep Britain's hearts beating. As the nation's leading heart charity, BHF exists for everyone. And with over 60 years of scientific breakthroughs behind them, BHF's achievements have already helped to save and improve millions of lives: BHF developed the first portable defibrillator; powered the development of pacemaker technology; and enabled the very first heart transplant in the UK.</p> <p>When a pipeline bursts or pressure gets too high or low, the impact on gas networks can be devastating; and the same is true for the heart and there is only so much it can take before problems may manifest. With 7.6 million people living with heart and circulatory diseases right now, this partnership will help us make all the difference. The BHF supplies the nation with reliable, accurate information (which is PIF (Patient Information Forum) certified) that helps more people to manage and improve their heart health. But BHF also provide people with the equipment, skills, and confidence to save a life in the instance of a cardiac arrest.</p> <p>If we take a reading of the BHF's Mission Gauge, the numbers show just how far-reaching BHF's impact is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BHF currently receive an average of 132 contacts a day through their Heart Helpline – in 2023 BHF responded to 18,008 calls, 3,726 emails and 1,698 chats. BHF's website receives c.2.8 million visits per month and, last year, their information support pages clocked over 32 million views. BHF have helped train over 7 million people in the life saving skill of CPR. BHF's national defibrillator network has helped map nearly 100,000 defibs in the UK, providing the NHS Ambulance services with vital information, so that they can be accessed quickly when needed.

	<p>BHF will record the number of enquiries to the Heart Helpline and the number of PSR conversations that have taken place. Where possible, BHF will record and share numerical data to show the levels of engagement from individuals to the helpline in the geographical areas that Cadent serve, to demonstrate the level of impact for those affected by heart and circulatory diseases in those specific locations. With support from Cadent, BHF know they can reach an even larger audience and change lives. BHF's pioneering work has helped to halve deaths from heart and circulatory diseases in the UK each year, but together we'll be able to drill deeper and save even more lives, leaving a legacy of impact across generations to come.</p>
Information Required	Description
<p>Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria</p>	<p>Cadent's funding through the VCMA will save lives across the homes, businesses, and communities it serves, and beyond.</p> <p>Cadent funding and support will make it possible to:</p> <p>Partially fund the running of BHF's Heart Helpline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund 50% of the running costs of the Heart Helpline for 12 months. This includes all permanent employees and extra cardiac nurse support roles which we deploy in response to demand. This means we can ensure we answer all enquiries with a quicker response time across our calls, emails, and live chats. • Allow BHF to market their helpline service more widely to the nation to ensure that those most vulnerable/at risk are aware of the support they can receive. <p>As a world leading health charity, everything BHF do is measured and evaluated for effectiveness. It will be possible to track the impact of the partnership for each area Cadent are funding, establishing joint KPI's and providing regular impact reports. BHF will update Cadent on the measurables of each programme, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people using the Heart Helpline service. Contact data will be assessed to whether they received the relevant information, their confidence levels, and any behaviour change. • Quantity of signposts to PSR and energy efficient conversations through the BHF Heart Helpline and numbers of click throughs to PSR information on the BHF website. <p>Our collaboration will develop case studies highlighting the experiences of individuals whose lives have been affected by Cadent's funding, which can be shared with colleagues and networks. BHF's Heart Stories team will work with Cadent to identify and collect relevant content.</p> <p>Energy Efficiency - 11,000 persons will receive information on energy efficiency to help reduce their usage and lower fuel bills.</p> <p>Carbon Monoxide - 11,000 persons will receive information on CO signs and symptoms</p>

	<p>PSR 11,000 - persons will receive information on PSR benefits and how to sign up.</p> <p>Income maximisation advice – 1,000 persons will receive information on benefits and budgeting and signposting.</p> <p>1,000 persons clicking to PSR information on BHF website.</p>
<p>Project Partners and Third Parties Involved</p>	<p>British Heart Foundation will be the principal partner for this project, but we intend to collaborate with all Centres for Warmth to supercharge the impact of our partnership.</p> <p>Warmer homes, healthier hearts and greater access to support for society's most vulnerable – that's what we'll achieve by working together with Cadent. Throughout all locations, we'll promote BHF's vital information and support services to those that need it most, keeping them safe, heart-healthy, and better connected to their community.</p> <p>This project will be game changing for all – both for the Cadent family and their communities – and will protect more hearts across the nation.</p>
<p>Potential for New Learning</p>	<p>BHF's groundbreaking collaboration will help Cadent lead the way in protecting vulnerable consumers and their heart health – and be a trailblazing flagship partner for the BHF in the utilities sector. Together we will protect the hearts of everyone across the UK, all whilst aiming to inspire new industry standards across the Gas Distribution Networks.</p> <p>BHF know that Cadent has made a commitment within its RII02 Business plan to have two million trusted conversations to raise awareness of the PSR by 2026. BHF will take an active role in helping Cadent achieve this ambitious goal by helping signpost to this vital service where relevant. Together, we will identify how many of BHF's service user's crossover and what more we can do to support them.</p> <p>Cadent will be powering key programs of work that will allow BHF to continue understanding what heart health conditions the public are most concerned about. We will learn more about CPR uptake, barriers to learning and understand which communities need more signposting and better support.</p> <p>We'll be directly supporting Cadent colleagues, too. BHF know how important it is for Cadent to support their workforce and how seriously the company takes safety and wellbeing. From engineers to remote workers, we'll work with Cadent to provide CPR training to all. Cadent employees may also be living with heart and circulatory conditions or be unaware of the importance of looking after their heart – together BHF and Cadent can explore how heart health affects employees.</p> <p>Any learnings will be shared with all stakeholders, including the Gas Distribution Network's via a BHF Account Manager. These learnings have the power to make both a systemic and long-lasting impact to all the families, homes, businesses, and communities Cadent serves.</p>

Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations, including NPV

The SROI for this project has been assessed by using the GDN rulebook and has been calculated using the following activities:

- 11,000 people receiving CO advice in person and via social media posts
- 11,000 people receiving PSR advice in person and via social media posts
- 11,000 people receiving energy efficiency advice in person and via social media posts
- 1,000 people receiving income maximisation benefits advice in person.

The screenshot shows a software interface for SROI calculations. It is divided into several sections:

- Project information:**

Name:	BHFKC
WACC:	4.97%
Year of assessment:	2026
Start year of benefits:	2025
End year of benefits:	2026
Attribution:	0.00%
- Results:**

Cost (discounted):	€329,322.84
Customer volume:	24100
GPV:	€1,784,748.34
NPV:	€1,454,825.50
SROI:	€4.41
- Non-standardised activity inputs:**

Cost (discounted):	
GPV:	
- Buttons:** Calculate, Save, Clear
- Table of Activities:**

Activities	Is the activity delivered via direct referral or signposting?	Overall Reach	In-person conversations (1-2-1)	Digital media (visual)
CO Safety Information	No	11,000	25.0%	75.0%
Energy Efficiency Advice (Behavioural)	No	11,000	25.0%	75.0%
Income Maximisation (Welfare Benefits)	No	1,000	100.0%	
PSR Registration	Direct Referral	1,100		

SROI = £1: £4.41

VCMA Project Start and End Date

April 25 – March 26

Geographical Area

All of Cadent’s networks

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: 12/11/25	Review Completed By: Kate Clarke
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Stage 2: Sustainability and Social Purpose Team Management Review

Date Management Review Completed: 19/11/25	Review Completed By: Gemma Norton
Step 3: Director of Sustainability & Social Purpose Sign-Off: Phil Burrows	
Director of Sustainability and Social Purpose Sign-Off Date: 23/02/26	
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: February 2026	
Date that Notification Email Sent to Ofgem: February 2026	