

Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA)

Project Eligibility Assessment (PEA)
Centre for Warmth – Slough Council for Voluntary Service

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Updated May 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: <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; 	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	Centre for Warmth – Slough Council for Voluntary Service
Funding GDN(s)	Cadent company-specific project
Role of GDN(s) *For Collaborative VCMA Projects only	Not applicable
Date of PEA Submission	May 2023 Updated May 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)	Centre Costs: £100,000.00 Slow Cookers: £10,250 300 Project Management: £4,410.00 <u>Updated May 2025 – additional costs</u> Centre costs: £41,585.00 Slow cookers: £1,670.40 (£27.84 x 60 large slow cookers) Leaflets: £1,763.64 Project Management cost (4%): £1,800.76 Total: £46,819.80
Total VCMA Funding Required (£k)	£114,660.00 <u>Updated May 2025</u> £161,479.80
Problem(s)	<p>Slough is the most deprived part of Berkshire with households suffering from one, two or three factors of deprivation. Some 36.6 per cent of households are affected under one dimension, with this figure dropping to 16.4 per cent for two dimensions and 4.4 per cent for three dimensions.</p> <p>The latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures (from September 2019) looks at levels of income deprivation in towns and cities across 316 local authorities.</p> <p>¹The figures are based on the proportion of people in an area who are out of work or on low earnings. and Slough is ranked 117th most income deprived in England. In Slough, 12.6 per cent of the population was income deprived in 2019.</p>

¹ www.sloughobserver.co.uk

	<p>Of the 80 neighbourhoods in Slough, four of them were among the 20 per cent most income deprived in England.</p> <p>²In Slough, 4993 households (9.5%) live in fuel poverty. For every 1000 homes, on average 152 received support from the main national energy efficiency programme.</p> <p>³Fuel poverty in England is measured using the Low-Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator. Under this indicator, a household is considered to be fuel poor if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they are living in a property with a fuel poverty energy efficiency rating of band D or below and, • when they spend the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a residual income below the official poverty line <p><u>Updated May 2025</u></p> <p>Slough faces urgent and complex challenges related to fuel poverty and household safety, disproportionately affecting its most vulnerable communities. While inflation has eased, many individuals are still facing the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and many residents are struggling to afford the basic necessities, including “heating and eating”.</p> <p>This project has proven to be successful and driven real change by ensuring that various communities in Slough, particularly underrepresented communities receive essential information on CO safety, energy efficiency, income maximisation and the PSR, in a way that is culturally appropriate and accessible. However, in order for the project to continue and grow, Slough CVS needs the funding and resources provided by Cadent to be extended.</p>
<p>Scope and Objectives</p>	<p><u>Project Scope</u></p> <p>Cadent will provide Slough Council for Voluntary Service with £114,660.00 of VCMA funding to deliver a 2-year Centre for Warmth project.</p> <p>They will provide infrastructure support to our voluntary and community partners, help them to develop and grow and meet the social and health needs of their most vulnerable communities.</p> <p>The two-year 2023-2025 agreement replicates the previous project model in other Centres for Warmth, where staff are trained to give Carbon Monoxide, PSR and energy efficiency advice to the community.</p> <p>The VCMA funding will be used for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x Wellbeing co-ordinator - This person will oversee 51 multi-bilingual volunteers providing calls to up to 100 vulnerable clients across Slough. • Once trained, the co-ordinator will share their learnings with the 51 volunteers who will then work with clients and

² www.nea.org.uk

³ www.gov.uk

the community to promote energy efficiency, CO and PSR advice in many languages.

- Provide outreach appointments to seldom heard and underrepresented communities, working with local mosques, temples, gurdwaras, churches, cultural centres, cafes, and warm space hubs.
- To develop video content in diverse languages on carbon monoxide awareness, PSR information and energy-saving top tips to reach people who have a visual impairment, learning disability, language barrier or are unable to read.
- To offer slow cooking classes to charities and embed cultural recipes which use a slow cooker as an alternative to cooking on the hob.
- To provide training to all the volunteers to build their capacity in areas of communication skills, and safeguarding. Diversity and equality and making every contact count. This will enable them to take on the CO, PSR and energy efficiency training.

The charity hope to do this by having Cadent information stands at the heart and centre of these communities. Taking carbon monoxide alarms, energy-saving tips and registering people on the Priority Services Register (PSR) at local mosques, gurdwaras, temples, Slough Refugee Support, festival events, carnivals and other community engagement activities to reach out to diverse communities across Slough that may not always come into our centre based in the town centre. They will also work with the communities that are based at our centre such as Turning Point – for drugs and alcohol rehabilitation, Aik Saath (Together as One) – working with young minority carers and schools, Home Start, supporting families and young children and Art Beyond Belief – supporting people with mental health needs.

In addition to this, the charity is also linked in with 500 plus charities and provides a weekly e-newsletter where they can share information on how to get access to carbon monoxide alarms and PSR to those vulnerable residents who can benefit from this free service and be safer in their homes. Through this project, Slough CVS can also offer our charities that have regular cooking sessions the option to join an energy-saving scheme of promoting the use of slow cookers within a six-week cooking programme, where they try out recipes that use slow cookers and provide slow cookers to all attendees at the end of the programme as an incentive to save energy in their homes. In addition to this, they have a chef at Slough CVS that has 1.5K plus national followers and can ask her to promote her *own* recipes using the slow cooker in more than one language. There is a lot of scope to what the charity can offer in encouraging people to take up energy-saving tips over the years, helping people to save fuel costs and live healthier and happier lifestyles.

The aim is to use the first six months of the project to start outreach work in the community and see what works well and make positive recommendations and changes via the feedback of the community and their statutory partners.

	<p><u>Updated May 2025</u></p> <p>Cadent will provide Slough CVS with additional funding for a 10-month extension. The funding will enable Slough CVS to deliver the additional services below.</p> <p><u>Project Objectives</u></p> <p>The success of the project will be measured against achieving the below objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 1,400 individuals with PSR advice via one-to-one or group conversations. • Sign 140 individuals onto the PSR. • Provide energy efficiency advice to 800 individuals via one-to-one or group conversations. • Support 200 individuals with income maximisation advice. • Distribute 60 free slow cookers via local community organisations that are a part of their network. They will work together to coordinate and deliver support focussed on slow cooking – promoting it as a health, energy efficient and affordable alternative cooking method. • Provide 1,200 individuals with CO awareness advice via one-to-one or group conversations. • Provide 50 most-at-risk individuals with CO alarms. • 1,000 individuals will attend the centre and have access to loneliness and isolation support.
<p>Why the Project is Being Funded Through the VCMA</p>	<p>We believe that the project meets all of the Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance eligibility criteria:</p> <p>a. Have a positive, or a forecasted positive, Social Return on Investment (SROI) including for the gas consumers funding the VCMA Project:</p> <p>The project delivers a positive forecasted social return on investment. This is based on achieving the target reach for income maximisation, registrations to the PSR and education on carbon monoxide. More information can be found in the relevant section below.</p> <p>b. Either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide support to consumers in Vulnerable Situations and relate to energy safeguarding, or, ii. Provide awareness of the dangers of CO, or, iii. Reduce the risk of harm caused by CO; <p>The project delivers services that meet all three elements of this criteria. For example, the specialist advisors will help households maximise their income, enabling residents to afford the cost of heating their home to an adequate level. The project will also raise awareness of the dangers of CO and promote registration to the PSR.</p> <p>c. Have defined outcomes and the associated actions to achieve these:</p> <p>Cadent and The Slough CVS Centre have entered into a service agreement that will contain the project objective and actions. Further detail can also be found below.</p>

	<p>d. Go beyond activities that are funded through other price control mechanism(s) or required through licence obligations, and,</p> <p>This method of delivering support to customers in vulnerable situations falls outside of Cadent's BAU activities and other licence conditions.</p> <p>e. Not be delivered through other external funding sources directly accessed by a GDN, including through other government (national, devolved or local) funding,</p> <p>This project will be solely delivered through Cadent's VCMA funding.</p>
<p>Evidence of Stakeholder/Customer Support</p>	<p>Temperature Checks – we complete periodic ‘temperature checks’ with a cross section of our customer base, including our Customer Forum. These demonstrate 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 – hence this.</p> <p>The Energy Diaries research – through extensive research with customers living in fuel poverty over a period of several months, we then engaged with experts such as Citizen’s Advice, NEA and a suite of other charities operating in this space to co-create several additional initiatives that Cadent could offer to its customers. This was one of these initiatives.</p> <p>Charity Partnerships – we have strategic level partnerships in place with around 40 consumer advice organisations and charities. We engage regularly to assess the benefits of existing projects and consider options elsewhere, taking the opportunity to benchmark against others and seek to learn.</p> <p>Centres for Warmth – the teams running the centres also fed into the development of this initiative, when considering the successes of the existing centre projects and opportunities for enhancements, based on the specific needs of the customers/households already being supported.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback – Working with various Stakeholders we can understand the needs of customers living in vulnerable situations across our networks. Regular conversations and check ins with organisations such as Citizens Advice, National Energy Action and Groundwork. These regular check ins allow us to gain feedback on the projects we are or should be supporting and ensuring that the projects are in the best interests of our customers. The guidance we are being given is consistently around supporting customers living in fuel poverty and especially in light of the current energy crisis.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback – We have sent out questionnaires to organisations we deal with and some that have an interest in the customers we are looking to support, and we have received overwhelming support and confirmation that the projects we are supporting are appropriate and are helping those most at risk.</p> <p><u>Updated May 2025</u></p> <p>Many of our stakeholders continue to support activities and projects centred around tackling fuel poverty, hand-in hand with</p>

	<p>the cost-of-living crisis. To this day, the Centres for Warmth project continues to be advocated by many.</p> <p>Slough CVS – Cost of living support for residents</p> <p>Slough council developed and published a cost-of-living resource pack in 2022, offering signposting to groups for support with food, energy, skills and more - part of the council's work to support residents to make the most of the help available. Published editions can be found online at www.slough.gov.uk/costofliving.</p> <p>The Slough CVS Centres for Warmth, Wellbeing at Home project is featured in the Autumn/Winter 23/24 edition as a key resource, offering support for residents, especially those who are vulnerable or struggling due to the rise in living costs. This recognition reflects strong stakeholder backing and the project's role in addressing pressing customer support challenges.</p>
<p>Information Required</p>	<p>Description</p>
<p>Outcomes, Associated Actions and Success Criteria</p>	<p>The partnership with Slough Council for Voluntary Services will form part of Cadent's wider Centres for Warmth network. The Centre for Warmth project model relies on the provision of VCMA funding, materials and resource to a community centre located in an area of high deprivation, fuel poverty, and carbon monoxide risk. The increased levels of funding, resource and materials enable the community centre to ramp up its existing support for customers in vulnerable situations.</p> <p><u>Project Outcomes</u></p> <p>The Slough CVS Centre for Warmth Project aims to achieve the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individuals will report an increased awareness on the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) and have a reduced risk of harm caused by CO. ● Provide support to local residents by offering outreach appointments to those who cannot attend a centre. ● Provide individuals with energy efficiency advice and carbon monoxide awareness. ● Individuals will report reduced levels of anxiety in fearing a utility outage by having conversations about the PSR and registering. ● Individuals will report on energy saving linked to using a slow cooker rather than a Hob. <p><u>Associated Actions</u></p> <p>The Slough CVS will implement the following associated actions to deliver the project's outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individuals will report reduced levels of anxiety in fearing a utility outage through being assisted to register to the Priority Services Register (PSR). Centre staff will all receive an awareness on the PSR and will help eligible households through the registration process.

- Clients will report an increased awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) and have a reduced risk of harm caused by CO. This will be achieved through the centre's staff providing CO awareness conversations and distributing CO alarms to the most at-risk households.
- Individuals will report an increased knowledge of reducing their energy usage by using a slow cooker from attending a slow cooking course at a centre.
- Individuals will report an increased awareness of using energy-saving tips to help lower energy consumption.

Success Criteria

The success of the project will be measured by meeting the below criteria:

- 1,363 individuals will receive help and support on energy efficiency.
- 1,363 individuals will receive an awareness conversation on the dangers of CO, and 1,000 of the most at-risk households will also receive a CO alarm.
- 1,013 individuals will improve their awareness of the PSR, and 250 eligible households will also be supported to register.
- 400 individuals will receive advice on using a slow cooker.
- 100 individuals will attend the sessions and activities to help alleviate loneliness and isolation through the befriending project.

Updated May 2025

The project extension builds directly on two years of delivery across Slough's diverse and vulnerable communities. Slough CVS have taken a careful look at what worked, what did not and what can be improved within the condensed 10-month timeframe. The additional funding will enable Slough CVS to continue and build onto the successful elements of the project to date and access the resources required to do so.

Associated Actions

Slough CVS will implement the following associated actions to deliver the project's outcomes:

- **Adapting Outreach:** trusted, hyper-local engagement—particularly through places of worship and cultural community hubs have helped to drive higher community participation. In Phase 2, these will become central venues for advice stands and information dissemination.
- **Improving Accessibility:** Multilingual, visual content proved more effective than written only materials. Slough CVS will build on this by using Cadent's visual resources in diverse languages including Urdu, Punjabi, Polish, Somali, Turkish, Mandarin/Cantonese (and moving

	<p>forward possibly other languages) ensuring they meet cultural and linguistic needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Empowerment: the trained multilingual volunteers and Community Champions will be provided with toolkits and training refreshers to deepen their engagement, building confidence to deliver targeted advice in informal, peer-led ways. • Cadent will continue to provide Slough CVS with the resources, support and knowledge required to deliver a successful project. <p>Though the extension duration is shorter, the refined model is designed to be more focused, data-driven, and impactful.</p> <p><u>Success Criteria</u></p> <p>The success of the extension will be measured against achieving the additional objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 1,400 individuals with PSR advice via one-to-one or group conversations. • Sign 140 individuals onto the PSR. • Provide energy efficiency advice to 800 individuals via one-to-one or group conversations. • Support 200 individuals with income maximisation advice. • Distribute 60 free slow cookers via local community organisations that are a part of their network. They will work together to coordinate and deliver support focussed on slow cooking – promoting it as a health, energy efficient and affordable alternative cooking method. • Provide 1,200 individuals with CO awareness advice via one-to-one or group conversations. • Provide 50 most-at-risk individuals with CO alarms. • 1,000 individuals will attend the centre and have access to loneliness and isolation support. <p>These figures are included in the SROI calculation below.</p>
<p>Project Partners and Third Parties Involved</p>	<p>Slough Council for voluntary services.</p>
<p>Potential for New Learning</p>	<p>Every area within Cadent’s networks see households suffering the same issues, lack of money, fuel poverty and low-income employment.</p> <p>Cadent have learned that each area also has issues specific to them and these are to help increase cross network understanding Cadent have set up a forum for the Centres for Warmth.</p> <p>Every quarter they meet online and discuss various topics, share stories, tips and best practice but most importantly resources such as food. Where one centre may have an excess, they will give it to a neighbouring one.</p> <p>Cadent will continue to listen to our partners to try to improve, the support and services where possible, through our Centre for warmth partnerships to assist our most vulnerable customers.</p>

	<p>Working in Partnership with Slough CVS will provide insight into the benefits and drawbacks of working in partnership with voluntary led - network organizations in order to deliver services, as a first. Examples include the skill set offered by volunteers and being linked to a network of other charities/organizations. dealt with differently.</p> <p><u>Updated May 2025</u></p> <p>The centres are under continuous pressure to meet the growing demands to support with many different community needs, especially as local authorities' resources dwindle. Therefore, by understanding the changing and continuing needs of different communities, Cadent can learn how to best support them with overcoming socioeconomic challenges. In turn, it can also support cross network learning.</p> <p>Where possible, Cadent will continue to listen to their partners to try to improve the support and services provided to vulnerable customers, as we have done with the extension model by ensuring the funding is more flexible to meet each centre's needs.</p>
<p>Scale of VCMA Project and SROI Calculations</p>	<p><u>Scale of VCMA Project</u></p> <p>Cadent will invest £114,660.00 in partnership with Slough CVS.</p> <p>This VCMA project will be delivered across a two-year partnership with Slough CVS.</p> <p>The project will benefit households in the proximity to Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead, and those in the wider area through the Wellbeing volunteers.</p> <p>Total investment = £114,660.00</p> <p><u>SROI Calculations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1,363 individuals supported with energy efficiency advice: £501,270.51 ● 1,363 individuals advised on CO: £11,898.99 ● 250 PSR sign-ups: £35,972.50 ● 400 individuals attending slow cooking classes = £94,568.00 ● 100 individuals will tackle loneliness and social isolation = £120,000.00 <p>Total Investment = £114,660.00</p> <p>Five-year gross present value = £763,710.00 One-year gross present value = £188,742.00</p> <p>Five-year net value = £649,050.00 One-year net value = £131,412.00</p> <p>SROI = £1:6</p>

	<p><u>Updated May 2025</u></p> <p>Cadent will invest further in partnership with Slough CVS, to support individuals in vulnerable situations within Slough. During the duration of the project including the original and extension period, Cadent will invest £161,479.80 over 34 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 individuals will receive income maximisation advice = £343,422.00 • 2,163 individuals will receive energy efficiency advice = £795,486.51 • 2,563 individuals will receive advice on CO = £22,374.99 • 390 individuals will be registered to the PSR = £56,117.00 • 460 individuals will receive a slow cooker and advice on cooking healthier meals = £108,753.00 • 215 individuals will be alleviated from loneliness and isolation = £365,500.00 <p>Five-year gross present value = £1,691,653.80 One-year gross present value = £394,230.76</p> <p>Five-year net present value = £1,530,174.00 One-year net present value = £336,900.76</p> <p>SROI Ratio: £1:9</p>
<p>VCMA Project Start and End Date</p>	<p>Start date: 01 May 2023 End date: 30 April 2025</p> <p><u>Updated May 2025</u></p> <p>End date: 31/03/2026</p>
<p>Geographical Area</p>	<p>The project will be delivered in Cadent's North London Network.</p>

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: 25/05/2023 Update: 09/07/2025	Review Completed By: Emma Turnbull Update: Emma Turnbull
Stage 2: Sustainability and Social Purpose Team Management Review	
Date Management Review Completed: 25/05/23 Update: Gurvinder Dosanjh	Review Completed By: Phil Burrows Update: 14/07/2025
Step 3: Director of Sustainability & Social Purpose Sign-Off: Mark Belmega Update: Phillip Burrows	
Director of Sustainability and Social Purpose Sign-Off Date: 21/12/2023 Update: 16/07/2025	
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: February 24 Update: February 2026	
Date that Notification Email Sent to Ofgem: February 24 Update: February 2026	